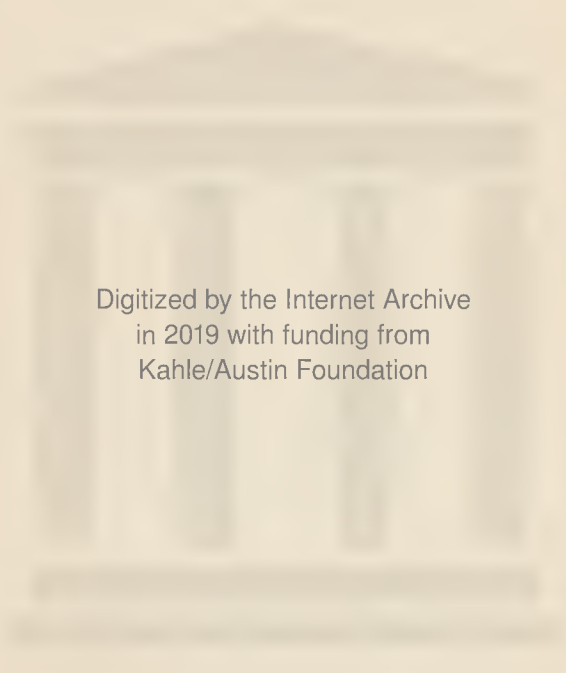


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THE RECREATIONS
OF A
COUNTRY PARSON.



THE
RECREATIONS
OF A
COUNTRY PARSON.



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CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
CONCERNING THE COUNTRY PARSON'S LIFE	7

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE ART OF PUTTING THINGS; BEING THOUGHTS ON REPRESENTATION AND MISREPRE- SENTATION	25
--	----

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING TWO BLISTERS OF HUMANITY; BEING THOUGHTS ON PETTY MALIGNITY AND PETTY TRICKERY	65
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING WORK AND PLAY	103
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING COUNTRY HOUSES AND COUNTRY LIFE .	133
--	-----

CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING TIDINESS; BEING THOUGHTS UPON AN OVERLOOKED SOURCE OF HUMAN CONTENT . . .	171
---	-----

CHAPTER VII.

HOW I MUSED IN THE RAILWAY TRAIN; BEING THOUGHTS ON RISING BY CANDLE-LIGHT; ON NER- VOUS FEARS; AND ON VAPOURING	PAGE 204
--	-------------

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING THE MORAL INFLUENCES OF THE DWELL- ING	235
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING HURRY AND LEISURE	267
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THE WORRIES OF LIFE, AND HOW TO MEET THEM	309
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

CONCERNING GIVING UP AND COMING DOWN	344
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNING THE DIGNITY OF DULNESS	380
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCERNING GROWING OLD	408
----------------------------------	-----



CONCLUSION	441
----------------------	-----



CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE COUNTRY PARSON'S LIFE.

THIS is Monday morning. It is a beautiful sunshiny morning early in July. I am sitting on the steps that lead to my door, somewhat tired by the duty of yesterday, but feeling very restful and thankful. Before me there is a little expanse of the brightest grass, too little to be called a lawn, very soft and mossy, and very carefully mown. It is shaded by three noble beeches, about two hundred years old. The sunshine around has a green tinge from the reflection of the leaves. Double hedges, thick and tall, the inner one of gleaming beech, shut out all sight of a country lane that runs hard by: a lane into which this gravelled sweep of would-be avenue enters, after winding deftly through evergreens, rich and old, so as to make the utmost of its little length. Or the side furthest from the lane, the miniature lawn opens into a garden of no great extent, and beyond the garden you see a green field sloping upwards to a wood which bounds the view. One half of the front of the house is covered to the roof by a climbing rose-tree, so rich now with cluster roses that you see only the white soft masses of fragrance. Crimson roses and fuchsias cover half-way up

the remainder of the front wall ; and the sides of the flight of steps are green with large-leaved ivy. If ever there was a dwelling embosomed in great trees and evergreens, it is here. Everything grows beautifully: oaks, horse-chestnuts, beeches : laurels, yews, hollies ; lilacs and hawthorn trees. Off a little way on the right, graceful in stem, in branches, in the pale bark, in the light-green leaves, I see my especial pet, a fair acacia. This is the true country ; not the poor shadow of it which you have near great and smoky towns. That sapphire air is polluted by no factory chimney. Smoke is a beauty here, there is so little of it : rising thin and blue from the cottage ; hospitable and friendly-looking from the rare mansion. The town is five miles distant : there is not even a village near. Green fields are all about : hawthorn hedges and rich hedge-rows : great masses of wood everywhere. But this is Scotland : and there is no lack of hills and rocks, of little streams and waterfalls ; and two hundred yards off, winding round that churchyard whose white stones you see by glimpses through old oak-branches, a large river glides swiftly by.

It is a quiet and beautiful scene ; and it pleases me to think that Britain has thousands and thousands like it. But of course none, in my mind, equal this : for this has been my home for five years.

I have been sitting here for an hour, with a book on my knee ; and upon that a piece of paper, whereon I have been noting down some thoughts for the sermon which I hope to write during this week, and to preach next Sunday in that little parish-church of which you can see a corner of a gable through the oaks which surround the churchyard. I have not been able to think very connectedly, indeed : for two little feet have been pattering

round me, two little hands pulling at me occasionally, and a little voice entreating that I should come and have a race upon the green. Of course I went: for like most men who are not very great or very bad, I have learned, for the sake of the little owner of the hands and the voice, to love every little child. Several times, too, I have been obliged to get up and make a dash at a very small weed which I discerned just appearing through the gravel; and once or twice my man-servant has come to consult me about matters connected with the garden and the stable. My sermon will be the better for all these interruptions. I do not mean to say that it will be absolutely good, though it will be as good as I can make it; but it will be better for the races with my little girl, and for the thoughts about my horse, than it would have been if I had not been interrupted at all. The Roman Catholic Church meant it well; but it was far mistaken when it thought to make a man a better parish priest by cutting him off from domestic ties, and quite emancipating him from all the little worries of domestic life. *That* might be the way to get men who would preach an unpractical religion, not human in interest, not able to comfort, direct, sustain through daily cares, temptations, and sorrows. But for preaching which will come home to men's business and bosoms; which will not appear to ignore those things which must of necessity occupy the greatest part of an ordinary mortal's thoughts; commend me to the preacher who has learned by experience what are human ties, and what is human worry.

It is a characteristic of country life, that living in the country you have so many cares outside. In town, you have nothing to think of (I mean in the way of little material matters) beyond the walls of your dwelling. It is

not your business to see to the paving of the street before your door ; and if you live in a square, you are not individually responsible for the tidiness of the shrubbery in its centre. When you come home, after the absence of a week or a month, you have nothing to look round upon and see that it is right. The space within the house's walls is not a man's proper province. Your library table and your books are all the domain which comes within the scope of your orderly spirit. But if you live in the country, in a house of your own with even a few acres of land attached to it, you have a host of things to think of when you come home from your week's or month's absence : you have an endless number of little things worrying you to take a turn round and see that they are all as they should be. You can hardly sit down and rest for their tugging at you. Is the grass all trimly mown ? Has the pruning been done that you ordered ? Has that rose-tree been trained ? Has that bit of fence been mended ? Are all the walks perfectly free from weeds ? Is there not a gap left in box-wood edgings ? and are the edges of all walks through grass sharp and clearly defined ? Has that nettly corner of a field been made tidy ? Has any one been stealing the fruit ? Have the neighboring cows been in your clover ? How about the stable ?—any fractures of the harness ?—any scratches on the carriage ?—anything amiss with the horse or horses ? All these, and innumerable questions more, press on the man who looks after matters for himself, when he arrives at home.

Still, there is good in all this. That which in a desponding mood you call a worry, in a cheerful mood you think a source of simple, healthful interest in life. And there is one case in particular, in which I doubt not the

reader of simple and natural tastes (and such may all my readers be) has experienced, if he be a country parson not too rich or great, the benefit of these gentle counter-irritants. It is when you come home, leaving your wife and children for a little while behind you. It is autumn: you are having your holiday: you have all gone to the sea-side. You have been away two or three weeks; and you begin to think that you ought to let your parishioners see that you have not forgotten them. You resolve to go home for ten days, which shall include two Sundays with their duty. You have to travel a hundred and thirty miles. So on a Friday morning you bid your little circle good-bye, and set off alone. It is not, perhaps, an extreme assumption that you are a man of sound sense and feeling, and not a selfish, conceited humbug: and, the case being so, you are not ashamed to confess that you are somewhat saddened by even that short parting; and that various thoughts obtrude themselves of possible accident and sorrow before you meet again. It is only ten days, indeed: but a wise man is recorded to have once advised his fellow-men in words which run as follows, 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' And as you sail along in the steamer, and sweep along in the train, you are thinking of the little things that not without tears bade their governor farewell. It was early morning when you left: and as you proceed on your solitary journey, the sun ascends to noon, and declines towards evening. You have read your newspaper: there is no one else in that compartment of the carriage: and hour after hour you grow more and more dull and downhearted. At length, as the sunset is gilding the swept harvest-fields, you reach the quiet little railway station among the hills. It is wonder-

ful to see it. There is no village: hardly a dwelling in sight: there are rocky hills all round; great trees; and a fine river, by following which the astute engineer led his railway to this seemingly inaccessible spot. You alight on that primitive platform, with several large trees growing out of it, and with a waterfall at one end of it and beyond the little palisade, you see your trap (let me not say carriage), your man-servant, your horse, perhaps your pair. How kindly and pleasant the expression even of the horse's back! How unlike the bustle of a railway station in a large town! The train goes, the brass of the engine red in the sunset; and you are left in perfect stillness. Your baggage is stowed, and you drive away gently. It takes some piloting to get down the steep slope from this out-of-the-way place. What a change from the thunder of the train to this audible quiet! You interrogate your servant first in the comprehensive question, if all is right. Relieved by his general affirmative answer, you descend into particulars. Any one sick in the parish? how was the church attended on the Sundays you were away? how is Jenny, who had the fever; and John, who had the paralytic stroke? How are the servants? how is the horse; the cow; the pig; the dog? How is the garden progressing? how about fruit; how about flowers? There was an awful thunderstorm on Wednesday: the people thought it was the end of the world. Two bullocks were killed: and thirteen sheep. Widow Wiggins' son had deserted from the army, and had come home. The harvest-home at such a farm is to-night: may Thomas go? What a little quiet world is the country parish: what a microcosm even the country parsonage! You are interested and pleased: you are getting over your stupid feeling of

depression. You are interested in all these little matters, not because you have grown a gossiping, little-minded man ; but because you know it is fit and right and good for you to be interested in such things. You have five or six miles to drive : never less : the scene grows always more homely and familiar as you draw nearer home. And arrived at last, what a deal to look at ! What a welcome on the servants' faces : such a contrast to the indifferent looks of servants in a town. You hasten to your library-table to see what letters await you : country folks are always a little nervous about their letters, as half expecting, half fearing, half hoping, some vague, great, undefined event. You see the snug fire : the chamber so precisely arranged, and so fresh-looking : you remark it and value it fifty times more amid country fields and trees than you would turning out of the manifest life and civilization of the city street. You are growing cheerful and thankful now ; but before it grows dark, you must look round out of doors : and *that* makes you entirely thankful and cheerful. Surely the place has grown greener and prettier since you saw it last ! You walk about the garden and the shrubbery : the gravel is right, the grass is right, the trees are right, the hedges are right, everything is right. You go to the stable-yard : you pat your horse, and pull his ears, and enjoy seeing his snug resting-place for the night. You peep into the cow-house, now growing very dark : you glance into the abode of the pig : the dog has been capering about you all this while. You are not too great a man to take pleasure in these little things. And now when you enter your library again, where your solitary meal is spread, you sit down in the mellow lamplight, and feel

quite happy. How different it would have been to have walked out of a street-cab into a town-house, with nothing beyond its walls to think of!

This is so sunshiny a day, and everything is looking so cheerful and beautiful, that I know my present testimony to the happiness of the country parson's life must be received with considerable reservation. Just at the present hour, I am willing to declare that I think the life of a country clergyman, in a pretty parish, with a well-conducted and well-to-do population, and with a fair living, is as happy, useful, and honourable as the life of man can be. Your work is all of a pleasant kind; you have, generally speaking, not too much of it; the fault is your own if you do not meet much esteem and regard among your parishioners of all degrees; you feel you are of some service in your generation: you have intellectual labours and tastes which keep your mind from growing rusty, and which admit you into a wide field of pure enjoyment: you have pleasant country cares to divert your mind from head-work, and to keep you for hours daily in the open air, in a state of pleasurable interest; your little children grow up with green fields about them and pure air to breathe: and if your heart be in your sacred work, you feel, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, a solid enjoyment in telling your fellow-creatures the Good News you are commissioned to address to them, which it is hard to describe to another, but which you humbly and thankfully take and keep. You have not, indeed, the excitement and the exhilaration of commanding the attention of a large educated congregation: those are reserved for the popular clergyman of a

city parish. But then, you are free from the temptation to attempt the unworthy arts of the clap-trap mob-orator, or to preach mainly to display your own talents and eloquence; you have striven to exclude all personal ambition; and, forgetting yourself or what people may think of yourself, to preach simply for the good of your fellow-sinners, and for the glory of that kind Master whom you serve. And around you there are none of those heart-breaking things which must crush the earnest clergyman in a large town: no destitution; poverty, indeed, but no starvation: and, although evil will be wherever man is, nothing of the gross, daring, shocking vice, which is matured in the dens of the great city. The cottage children breathe a confined atmosphere while within the cottage; but they have only to go to the door, and the pure air of heaven is about them, and they live in it most of their waking hours. Very different with the pale children of a like class in the city, who do but exchange the infected chamber for the filthy lane, and whose eyes are hardly ever gladdened by the sight of a green field. And when the diligent country parson walks or drives about his parish, not without a decided feeling of authority and ownership, he knows every man, woman, and child he meets, and all their concerns and cares. Still, even on this charming morning, I do not forget, that it depends a good deal upon the parson's present mood, what sort of account he may give of his country parish and his parochial life. If he have been recently cheated by a well-to-do farmer in the price of some farm produce; if he have seen a humble neighbour deliberately forcing his cow through a weak part of the hedge into a rich pasture-field of the glebe, and then have found him

ready to swear that the cow trespassed entirely without his knowledge or will; if he meet a hulking fellow carrying in the twilight various rails from a fence to be used as firewood; if, on a warm summer day, the whole congregation falls fast asleep during the sermon; if a farmer tells him what a bad and dishonest man a discharged man-servant was, some weeks after the parson had found that out for himself and packed off the dishonest man; if certain of the cottagers near appear disposed to live entirely, instead of only partially, of the parsonage larder; the poor parson may sometimes be found ready to wish himself in town, compact within a house in a street with no back door; and not spreading out such a surface as in the country he must, for petty fraud and peculation. But, after all, the country parson's great worldly cross lies for the most part in his poverty, and in the cares which arise out of that. It is not always so, indeed. In the lot of some the happy medium has been reached; they have found the "neither poverty nor riches" of the wise man's prayer. Would that it were so with all! For how it must cripple a clergyman's usefulness, how abate his energies, how destroy his eloquence, how sicken his heart, how narrow and degrade his mind, how tempt (as it has sometimes done), to unfair and dishonest shifts and expedients, to go about not knowing how to make the ends meet, not seeing how to pay what he owes! If I were a rich man, how it would gladden me to send a fifty-pound note to certain houses I have seen! What a dead weight it would lift from the poor wife's heart! Ah! I can think of the country parson, like poor Sydney Smith, adding his accounts, calculating his little means, wondering where he can pinch or pare any closer, till the poor

fellow bends down his stupified head and throbbing temples on his hands, and wishes he could creep into a quiet grave. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; or I should wonder how it does not drive some country parsons mad, to think what would become of their children if they were taken away. It is the warm nest upon the rotten bough. They need abundant faith; let us trust they get it. But in a desponding mood, I can well imagine such a one resolving that no child of his shall ever enter upon a course in life which has brought himself such misery as he has known.

I have been writing down some thoughts, as I have said, for the sermon of next Sunday. To-morrow morning I shall begin to write it fully out. Some individuals, I am aware, have maintained that listening to a sermon is irksome work; but to a man whose tastes lie in that way, the writing of sermons is most pleasant occupation. It does you good. Unless you are a mere false pretender, you cannot try to impress any truth, forcibly upon the hearts of others, without impressing it forcibly upon your own. All that you will ever make other men feel, will be only a subdued reflection of what you yourself have felt. And sermon-writing is a task that is divided into many stages. You begin afresh every week: you come to an end every week. If you are writing a book, the end appears very far away. If you find that although you do your best, you yet treat some part of your subject badly, you know that the bad passage remains as a permanent blot: and you work on under the cross-influence of that recollection. But if, with all your pains, this week's sermon is poor, why, you hope to do better next week. You seek a fresh field: you try again. No doubt, in preaching

your sermons you are somewhat annoyed by rustic boorishness and want of thought. Various bumpkins will forget to close the door behind them when they enter church too late, as they not unfrequently do. Various men with great hob-nailed shoes, entering late instead of quietly slipping into a pew close to the door, will stamp noisily up the passage to the further extremity of the church. Various faces will look up at you week by week, hopelessly blank of all interest or intelligence. Some human beings will not merely sleep, but loudly evince that they are sleeping. Well, you gradually cease to be worried by these little things. At first, they jarred through every nerve; but you grow accustomed to them. And if you be a man of principle and of sense, you know better than to fancy that amid a rustic people your powers are thrown away. Even if you have in past days been able to interest congregations of the refined and cultivated class, you will now show your talent and your principle at once by accommodating your instructions to the comprehension of the simple souls committed to your care. I confess I have no patience with men who profess to preach sermons carelessly prepared, because they have an uneducated congregation. Nowhere is more careful preparation needed; but of course it must be preparation of the right sort. Let it be received as an axiom, that the very first aim of the preacher should be to interest. He must interest, before he can hope to instruct or improve. And no matter how filled with orthodox doctrine and good advice a sermon may be: if it put the congregation to sleep, it is an abominably bad sermon.

Surely, I go on to think, this kind of life must affect all the productions of the mind of the man who leads it.

There must be a smack of the country, its scenes and its cares, about them all. You walk in shady lanes: you stand and look at the rugged bark of old trees: you help to prune evergreens: you devise flower-gardens and winding walks. You talk to pigs, and smooth down the legs of horses. You sit on mossy walls, and saunter by the river side, and through woodland paths. You grow familiar with the internal arrangements of poor men's dwellings: you see much of men and women in those solemn seasons when all pretences are laid aside; and they speak with confidence to you of their little cares and fears, for this world and the other. You kneel down and pray by the bedside of many sick; and you know the look of the dying face well. Young children whom you have humbly sought to instruct in the best of knowledge, have passed away from this life in your presence, telling you in interrupted sentences whither they trusted they were going, and bidding you not forget to meet them there. You feel the touch of the weak fingers still; the parting request is not forgotten. You mark the spring blossoms come back; and you walk among the harvest sheaves in the autumn evening. And when you ride up the parish on your duty, you feel the influence of bare and lonely tracts, where, ten miles from home, you sometimes dismount from your horse, and sit down on a grey stone by the wayside, and look for an hour at the heather at your feet, and at the sweeps of purple moorland far away. You go down to the churchyard frequently: you sit on the gravestone of your predecessor who died two hundred years since; and you count five, six, seven spots where those who served the cure before you sleep. Then, leaning your head upon your hand, you look thirty years into the future, and

wonder whether you are to grow old. You read, through moss-covered letters, how a former incumbent of the parish died in the last century, aged twenty-eight. That afternoon, coming from a cottage where you had been seeing a frail old woman, you took a flying leap over a brook near, with precipitous sides ; and you thought that some day, if you lived, you would have to creep quietly round by a smoother way. And now you think you see an aged man, tottering and grey, feebly walking down to the churchyard as of old, and seating himself hard by where you sit. The garden will have grown weedy and untidy : it will not be the trim, precise dwelling which youthful energy and hopefulness keep it now.

Let it be hoped that the old man's hat is not seedy, nor his coat threadbare : it makes one's heart sore to see *that*. And let it be hoped that he is not alone. But you go home, I think, with a quieter and kindlier heart.

You live in a region, mental and material, that is very entirely out of the track of worldly ambition. You do not blame it in others : you have learnt to blame few things in others severely, except cruelty and falsehood : but you have outgrown it for yourself. You hear, now and then, of this and the other school or college friend becoming a great man. One is an Indian hero : one is attorney-general : one is a cabinet minister. You like to see their names in the newspapers. You remember how, in college competitions with them, you did not come off second-best. You are struck at finding that such a man, whom you recollect as a fearful dunce, is getting respectably on through life : you remember how at school you used to wonder whether the difference between the clever boy and the booby would be in after days the same great gulf that it was then. Your life

goes on very regularly, each week much like the last. And, on the whole, it is very happy. You saunter for a little in the open air after breakfast: you do so when the evergreens are beautiful with snow as well as when the warm sunshine makes the grass white with widely-opened daisies. Your children go with you wherever you go. You are growing subdued and sobered; but they are not: and when one sits on your knee, and lays upon your shoulder a little head with golden ringlets, you do not mind very much though your own hair (what is left of it) is getting shot with grey. You sit down in your quiet study to your work: what thousands of pages you have written at that table! You cease your task at one o'clock: you read your *Times*: you get on horse-back and canter up the parish to see your sick: or you take the ribbons and tool into the county town. You feel the stir of even its quiet existence: you drop into the bookseller's: you grumble at the venerable age of the *Reviews* that come to you from the elub. Generally, you cannot be bothered with calls upon your tattling acquaintanees: you leave these to your wife. You drive home again, through the shady lanes, away into the green country: your man-servant in his sober livery tells you with pride, when you go to the stable-yard for a few minutes before dinner, that Mr. Snooks, the great judge of horse-flesh, had declared that afternoon in the inn-stable in town, that he had not seen a better-kept carriage and harness anywhere, and that your plump steed was a noble creature. It is well when a servant is proud of his belongings: he will be a happier man, and a more faithful and useful. When you next drive out you will see the silver blazing in the sun with increased brightness. And now you have the pleasant evening,

before you. You never fail to dress for dinner: living so quietly as you do, it is especially needful, if you would avoid an encroaching rudeness, to pay careful attention to the little refinements of life. And the great event of the day over, you have music, books, and children: you have the summer saunter in the twilight: you have the winter evening fireside: you take perhaps another turn at your sermon for an hour or two. The day has brought its work and its recreation: you can look back each evening upon something done: save when you give yourself a holiday which you feel has been fairly toiled for. And what a wonderful amount of work, such as it is, you may, by exertion regular but not excessive, turn off in the course of the ten months and a-half of the working year!

And thus, day by day, and month by month, the life of the country parson passes quietly away. It will be briefly comprehended on his tombstone, in the assurance that he did his duty, simply and faithfully, through so many years. It is somewhat monotonous, but he is too busy to weary of it: it is varied by not much society, in the sense of conversation with educated men with whom the clergyman has many common feelings. But it is inexpressibly pleasing when, either to his own house or to a dwelling near, there comes a visitor with whom an entire sympathy is felt, though probably holding very antagonistic views: then come the 'good talks' with delighted Johnson: genial evenings, and long walks of afternoons. The daily post is a daily strong sensation, sometimes pleasing, sometimes painful, as he brings tidings of the outer world. You have your daily *Times*: each Monday morning brings your *Saturday Review*: and the *Illustrated London News* comes not

merely for the children's sake. You read all the Quarterlies, of course: you skim the monthlies: but it is with tenfold interest and pleasure that month by month you receive that magazine which is edited by a dear friend who sends it to you, and in which sometimes certain pages have the familiar look of a friend's face. You draw it wet from its big envelope: you cut its leaves with care: you enjoy the fragrance of its steam as it dries at the study fire: you glance at the shining backs of that long row of volumes into which the pleasant monthly visitants have accumulated: you think you will have another volume soon. Then there is a great delight in occasionally receiving a large bundle of books which have been ordered from your bookseller in the city a hundred miles off: in reading the address in such big letters that they must have been made with a brush: in stripping off the successive layers of immensely thick brown paper: in reaching the precious hoard within, all such fresh copies (who are they that buy the copies you turn over in the shop, but which you would not on any account take?): such fresh copies, with their bran-new bindings and their leaves so pure in a material sense: in cutting the leaves at the rate of two or three volumes an evening, and in seeing the entire accession of literature lying about the other table (not the one you write on) for a few days ere they are given to the shelves. You are not in the least ashamed to confess that you are pleased by all these little things. You regard it as not necessarily proving any special pettiness of mind or heart. You regard it as no proof of greatness in any man, that he should appear to care nothing for anything. Your private belief is that it shows him to be either a humbug or a fool.

In this little volume the indulgent reader will find certain of those Essays which the writer discovered on cutting the leaves of the magazine which comes to him on the last day of every month. They were written, as something which might afford variety of work, which often proves the most restful of all recreations. They are nothing more than that which they are called, a country's clergyman's *Recreations*. My solid work, and my first thoughts, are given to that which is the business and the happiness of my life. But these Essays have led me into a field which to myself was fresh and pleasant. And I have always returned from them, with increased interest, to graver themes and trains of thought. I have not forgot, as I wrote them, a certain time, when my little children must go away from their early home: when these evergreens I have planted and these walks I have made shall pass to my successor (may he be a better man!); and when I shall perhaps find my resting-place under those ancient oaks. Nor have I wholly failed to remember a coming day, when bishops and archbishops shall be called to render an account of the fashion in which they exercised their solemn and dignified trusts; and when I, who am no more than the minister of a Scotch country parish, must answer for the diligence with which I served my little cure.



CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE ART OF PUTTING THINGS:

BEING THOUGHTS ON REPRESENTATION AND
MISREPRESENTATION.

LET the reader be assured that the word *Representation*, which has caught his eye on glancing at the title of this essay, has nothing earthly to do with the Elective Franchise, whether in boroughs or counties. Not a syllable will be found upon the following pages bearing directly or indirectly upon any New Reform Bill. I do not care a rush who is member for this county. I have no doubt that all members of Parliament are very much alike. Everybody knows that each individual legislator who pushes his way into the House, is actuated solely by a pure patriotic love for his country. No briefless barrister ever got into Parliament in the hope of getting a place of twelve hundred a year. No barrister in fair practice ever did so in the hope of getting a silk gown, or the Solicitor-Generalship, or a seat on the bench. No merchant or country-gentleman ever did so in the hope of gaining a little accession of dignity and influence in the town or county in which he lives. All these things are universally understood; and they are mentioned here merely to enable it to be said, that this treatise has nothing to do with them.

Edgar Allan Poe, the miserable genius who died in America a few years ago, declared that he never had the least difficulty in tracing the logical steps by which he chose any subject on which he had ever written, and matured his plan for treating it. And some readers may remember a curious essay, contained in his collected works, in which he gives a minute account of the genesis of his extraordinary poem, *The Raven*. But Poe was a humbug; and it is impossible to place the least faith in anything said by him upon any subject whatever. In his writings we find him repeatedly avowing that he would assert any falsehood, provided it were likely to excite interest and 'create a sensation.' I believe that most authors could tell us that very frequently the conception and the treatment of their subject have darted on them all at once, they could not tell how. Many clergymen know how strangely texts and topics of discourse have been suggested to them, while it was impossible to trace any link of association with what had occupied their minds the instant before. The late Douglas Jerrold relates how he first conceived the idea of one of his most popular productions. Walking on a winter day, he passed a large enclosure full of romping boys at play. He paused for a minute; and as he looked and mused, a thought flashed upon him. It was not so beautiful, and you would say not so natural, as the reflections of Gray, as he looked from a distance at Eton College. As Jerrold gazed at the schoolboys, and listened to their merry shouts, there burst upon him the conception of *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*! There seems little enough connexion with what he was looking at; and although Jerrold declared that the sight suggested the idea, he could not pretend to trace the link of association.

It would be very interesting if we could accurately know the process by which authors, small or great, piece together their grander characters. How did Milton pile up his Satan; how did Shakspeare put together Hamlet or Lady Macbeth; how did Charlotte Brontë imagine Rochester? Writers generally keep their secrets, and do not let us see behind the scenes. We can trace, indeed, in successive pieces by Sheridan, the step-by-step development of his most brilliant jests, and of his most gushing bursts of the feeling of the moment. No doubt Lord Brougham had tried the woollack, to see how it would do, before he fell on his knees upon it (on the impulse of the instant), at the end of his great speech on the Reform Bill. But of course Lord Brougham would not tell us; and Sheridan did not intend us to know. Even Mr. Dickens, when, in his preface to the cheap edition of *Pickwick*, he avows his purpose of telling us all about the origin of that amazingly successful serial, gives us no inkling of the process by which he produced the character which we all know so well. He tells us a great deal about the mere details of the work: the pages of letter-press, the number of illustrations, the price and times of publication. But the process of actual authorship remains a mystery. The great painters would not tell where they got their colours. The effort which gives a new character to the acquaintance of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen, shall be concealed beneath a decorous veil. All that Mr. Dickens tells us is this: 'I thought of Mr. Pickwick, and wrote the first number.' And to the natural question of curiosity, 'How on earth did you think of Mr. Pickwick?' the author's silence replies, 'I don't choose to tell you *that!*'

And now, courteous reader, you are humbly asked to

suffer the writer's discursive fashion, as he records how the idea of the present discourse, treatise, dissertation, or essay flashed upon his mind. Yesterday was a most beautiful frosty day. The air was indescribably exhilarating: the cold was no more than bracing; and as I fared forth for a walk of some miles, I saw the tower of the ancient church, green with centuries of ivy, looking through the trees which surround it, the green ivy silvered over with hoar-frost. The hedges on either hand, powdered with rime, were shining in the cold sunshine of the winter afternoon. First, I passed through a thick pinewood, bordering the road on both sides. The stems of the fir-trees had that warm, rich colour which is always pleasant to look at; and the green branches were just touched with frost. One undervalues the evergreens in summer: their colour is dull when compared with the fresher and brighter green of the deciduous trees; but now, when these gay transients have changed to shivering skeletons, the hearty firs, hollies, and yews warm and cheer the wintry landscape. Not the wintry, I should say, but the *winter* landscape, which conveys quite a different impression. The word *wintry* wakens associations of bleakness, bareness, and bitterness; a hearty evergreen tree never looks wintry, nor does a landscape to which such trees give the tone. Then emerging from the wood, I was in an open country. A great hill rises just ahead, which the road will skirt by and bye: on the right, at the foot of a little cliff hard by, runs a shallow, broad, rapid river. Looking across the river, I see a large range of nearly level park, which at a mile's distance rises into upland; the park shows broad green glades, broken and bounded by fine trees, in clumps and in avenues. In summer-

time you would see only the green leaves: but now, peering through the branches, you can make out the outline of the grey turrets of the baronial dwelling which has stood there, added to, taken from, patched, and altered, but still the same dwelling, for the last four hundred years. And on the left, I am just passing the rustic gateway through which you approach that quaint cottage on the knoll two hundred yards off—one story high, with deep thatch, steep gables, overhanging eaves, and verandah of rough oak—a sweet little place, where Izaak Walton might successfully have carried out the spirit of his favourite text, and ‘studied to be quiet.’ All this way, three miles and more, I did not meet a human being. There was not a breath of air through the spines of the firs, and not a sound except the ripple of the river. I leant upon a gate, and looked into a field. Something was grazing in the field; but I cannot remember whether it was cows, sheep, oxen, elephants, or camels; for as I was looking, and thinking how I should begin a sermon on a certain subject much thought upon for the last fortnight, my mind resolutely turned away from it, and said, as plainly as mind could express it, For several days to come I shall produce material upon no subject but one,—and *that* shall be the comprehensive, practical, suggestive, and most important subject of the ART OF PUTTING THINGS!

And indeed there is hardly a larger subject, in relation to the social life of the nineteenth century in England; and there is hardly a practical problem to the solution of which so great an amount of ingenuity and industry, honest and dishonest, is daily brought, as the grand problem of setting forth yourself, your goods, your horses, your case, your plans, your thoughts and arguments—all your belongings, in short—to the best advantage.

From the Prime Minister, who exerts all his wonderful skill and eloquence to put his policy before Parliament and the country in the most favourable light, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who does his very best to cast a rosy hue even upon an income-tax, down to the shopman who arranges his draperies in the window against market-day in that fashion which he thinks will prove most fascinating to the maid-servant with her newly-paid wages in her pocket, and the nurse who in a most lively and jovial manner assures a young lady of three years old that she will never feel the taste of her castor-oil, — yea, even to the dentist who with a joke and a smiling face approaches you with his forceps in his hand: — from the great Attorney-General seeking to place his view of his case with convincing force before a bewildered jury (that view being flatly opposed to common sense), down to the schoolboy found out in some mischievous trick and trying to throw the blame upon somebody else: almost all civilized beings in Great Britain are from morning to night labouring hard to put things in general or something in particular in the way that they think will lead to the result which best suits their views; — are, in short, practising the art of representing or misrepresenting things for their own advantage. Great skill, you would say, must result from this constant practice: and indeed it probably does. But then, people are so much in the habit of trying to *put things* themselves, that they are uncommonly sharp at seeing through the devices of others. ‘Set a thief to catch a thief,’ says the ancient adage: and so, set a man who can himself tell a very plausible story without saying anything positively untrue, to discover the real truth under the rainbow tints of the plausible story told by another.

But do not fancy, my kind reader, that I have any

purpose of making a misanthropical onslaught upon poor humanity. I am very far from desiring to imply that there is anything essentially wrong or dishonest in trying to put things in the most favourable light for our views and plans. The contrary is the case. It is a noble gift, when a man is able to put great truths or momentous facts before our minds with that vividness and force which shall make us feel these facts and truths in their grand reality. A great evil, to which human beings are by their make subject, is, that they can talk of things, know things, and understand things, without *feeling* them in their true importance — without, in short, *realizing* them. There appears to be a certain numbness about the mental organs of perception; and the man who is able to *put things* so strikingly, clearly, pithily, forcibly, glaringly, whether these things are religious, social, or political truths, as to get through that numbness, that crust of insensibility, to the *quick* of the mind and heart, must be a great man, an earnest man, an honest man, a good man. I believe that any great reformer will find less practical discouragement in the opposition of bad people than in the *inertia* of good people. You cannot get them to feel that the need and the danger are so imminent and urgent; you cannot get them to bestir themselves with the activity and energy which the case demands. You cannot get them to take it in that the open sewer and the airless home of the working man are such a very serious matter; you cannot get them to feel that the vast uneducated masses of the British population form a mine beneath our feet which may explode any day, with God knows what devastation. I think that not all the wonderful eloquence, freshness, and pith of Mr. Kingsley form a talent so valuable as his power of compelling people to

feel what they had always known and talked about, but never felt. And wherein lies that power, but just in his skill to *put things* — in his power of truthful representation?

Sydney Smith was once talking with an Irish Roman Catholic priest about the proposal to endow the Romish Church in Ireland. 'We would not take the Saxon money,' said the worthy priest, quite sincerely; 'we would not defile our fingers with it. No matter whether Parliament offered us endowments or not, we would not receive them.' 'Suppose,' replied Sydney Smith, 'you were to receive an official letter that on calling at such a bank in the town three miles off, you would hereafter receive a hundred pounds a quarter, the first quarter's allowance payable in advance on the next day; and suppose that you wanted money to do good, or to buy books, or anything else: do you mean to say you would not drive over to the town and take the hundred pounds out of the bank?' The priest was staggered. He had never looked at the thing in that precise light. He had never had the vague distant question of endowment brought so home to him. He had been quite sincere in his spirited repudiation of Saxon coin, as recorded above; but he had not exactly understood what he was saying and doing. 'Oh, Mr. Smith,' he replied, '*you have such a way of putting things!*' What a triumph of the Anglican's art of truthful representation!

One of the latest instances of skill in putting things which I remember to have struck me I came upon, where abundance of such skill may be found — in a leading article in the *Times*. The writer of that article was endeavouring to show that the work of the country clergy is extremely light. Of course he is sadly mistaken; but this by the way. As to sermons, said th

lively writer (I don't pretend to give his exact words), what work is there in a sermon? Just fancy that you are writing half a dozen letters of four pages each, and crossed! The thing was cleverly put; and it really came on me with the force of a fact, a new and surprising fact. Many sermons has this thin right hand written; but my impression of a sermon, drawn from some years' experience, is of a composition very different from a letter — something demanding that brain and heart should be worked to the top of their bent for more hours than need be mentioned here; something implying as hard and as exhausting labor as man can well go through. Surely, I thought, I have been working under a sad delusion! Only half a dozen light letters of gossip to a friend: *that* is the amount of work implied in a sermon! Have I been all these years making a bugbear of such a simple and easy matter as *that*? Here is a new and cheerful way of putting the thing! But unhappily, though the clever representation would no doubt convey to some thousands of readers the impression that to write a sermon was a very simple affair after all, it broke down, it crumpled up, it went to pieces when brought to the test of fact. When next morning I had written my text, I thought to myself, Now here I have just to do the same amount of work which it would cost me to write half a dozen letters to half a dozen friends, giving them our little news. Ah, it would not do! In a little, I was again in the struggle of mapping out my subject, and cutting a straight track through the jungle of the world of mind; looking about for illustrations, seeking words to put my meaning with clearness and interest before the simple country folk I preach to. It was not the least like letter-writing. The clever writer's way of putting

things was wrong; and though I acquit him of any crime beyond speaking with authority of a thing which he knew nothing about, I must declare that his representation was a misrepresentation. If you have sufficient skill, you may put what is painful so that it shall sound pleasant; you may put a wearisome journey by railway in such a connection with cozy cushions, warm rugs, a review or a new book, storm sweeping the fields without, and warmth and ease within, that it shall seem a delightful thing. You may put work, in short, so that it shall look like play. But actual experiment breaks down the representation. You cannot change the essential nature of things. You cannot make black white, though a clever man may make it seem so.

Still, we all have a great love for trying to put any hard work or any painful business, which it is certain we must go through, in such a light as may make it seem less terrible. And it is not difficult to deceive ourselves when we are eager to be deceived. No one can tell how much comfort poor Damien drew from the way in which he put the case on the morning of his death by horrible tortures: 'The day will be long,' he said, 'but it will have an end.' No one can tell what a gleam of light may have darted upon the mind of Charles I. as he knelt to the block, when Bishop Juxon put encouragingly the last trial the monarch had to go through: 'one last stage, somewhat turbulent and troublesome, *but still a very short one.*' No one can tell how much it soothed the self-love of Tom Purdie, when Sir Walter Scott ordered him to cut down some trees which Tom wished to stand, and positively commanded that they should go down in spite of all Tom's arguments and expostulations, and all this in the presence of a number of gentlemen

before whom Tom could not bear any impeachment of his woodcraft; no one, I say, can tell how much it soothed the worthy forester's self-love when after half an hour's sulky meditation he thought of the happy plan of putting the thing on another footing than that of obedience to an order, and looking up cheerfully again, said, 'As for those trees, I think I'll *take your advice*, Sir Walter!' Would it be possible, I wonder, thus pleasantly to *put* the writing of an article so as to do away the sense of the exertion which writing an article implies? Have we not all little tricks which we play upon ourselves, to make our labour seem lighter, our dignity greater, our whole position jollier, than in our secret soul we know is the fact? Think, then, thou jaded man, bending over the written page which is one day to attain the dignity of print in *Fraser* or *Blackwood*, how in these words thou art addressing many thousands of thy enlightened countrymen and thy fair countrywomen, and becoming known (as Fielding puts it in one of his simply felicitous sentences) 'to numbers who otherwise never saw or knew thee, and whom thou shalt never see or know.' Think how thou shalt lie upon massive library-tables, in substantially elegant libraries, side by side perhaps with Helps, Kingsley, or Hazlitt; how thou shalt lighten the cares of middle-aged men, and (if thou art a writer of fiction) be smuggled up to young ladies' chambers; who shall think, as they read thy article (oh, much mistaken!), what a nice man thou art! Alas! all that way of putting things is mere poetry. It wont do. It still remains, and always must remain, the stretch and strain of mind and muscle, to write. Let not the critic be severe on people who write ill: they deserve much credit and sympathy because they write

at all. But though these grand and romantic ways of putting the writing of one's article will not serve, there are little prosaic material expedients which really avail to put it in a light in which it looks decidedly less laborious. Slowly let the large drawer be pulled out wherein lies the paper which will serve, if we are allowed to see them, for many months to come. There lies the large blue quarto, so thick and substantial; there the massive foolscap, so soft and smooth, over which the pen so pleasantly and unscratchingly glides; *that* is the raw material for the article. Draw it forth deliberately: fold it accurately: then the ivory stridently cuts it through. Weigh the paper in your hand; then put the case thus: 'Well, it is only covering these pages with writing, after all; it is just putting three-and-twenty lines, of so many words each on the average, upon each of these unblotted surfaces.' Surely there is not so much in *that*. Do not think of all the innumerable processes of mind that go to it; of the weighing of the consequences of general propositions; of the choice of words; of the pioneering your track right on, not turning to either hand; of the memory taxed to bring up old thoughts upon your subject; of the clock striking unheard while you are bent upon your task, so much harder than carrying any reasonable quantity of coals, or blacking ever so many boots, or currying ever so many horses. Just stick to this view of the matter, just put the thing this way — that all you have to do is to blacken so many pages, and take the comfort of that way of putting it.

To such people as we human beings are, there is hardly any matter of greater practical importance than what we have called the Art of Putting Things. For, to us, things *are* what they *seem*. They affect us just according

to what we think them. Our knowledge of things, and our feeling in regard to things, are all contingent on the way in which these things have been put before us ; and what different ways there are of putting every possible doctrine, or opinion, or doing, or thing, or event ! And what mischievous results, colouring all our views and feelings, may follow from an important subject having been wrongly, disagreeably, injudiciously put to us when we were children ! How many men hate Sunday all their lives because it was put to them so gloomily in their boyhood ; and how many Englishmen, on the other hand, fancy a Scotch Sunday the most disagreeable of days because the case has been wrongly put to them, while in truth there is, in intelligent religious Scotch families, no more pleasant, cheerful, genial, restful, happy day. And did not Byron always hate Horace, put to him in youth with the associations of impositions and the birch ? There is no more sunshiny inmate of any home than the happy-tempered one who has the art of putting all things in a pleasant light, from the great misfortunes of life down to a broken carriage-spring, a servant's failings, a child's salts and senna. You are extremely indignant at some person who has used you ill ; you are worried and annoyed at his misconduct ; it is as though you were going about with a mustard blister applied to your mind : when a word or two from some genial friend puts the entire matter in a new light, and your irritation goes, the blister is removed, your anger dies out, you would like to pat the offending being on the head, and say you bear him no malice. And it is wonderful what a little thing sometimes suffices to put a case thus differently. When you are complaining of somebody's ill-usage, it will change your feeling and the look of things, if the friend

you are speaking to does no more than say of the peccant brother, 'Ah! poor fellow!' I think that every man or woman who has got servants, and who has pretty frequently to observe (I mean to see, not to speak of) some fault on their part, owes a deep debt of gratitude to the man, whoever he was, who thus kindly and wisely gave us a forbearing stand-point from which to regard a servant's failings, by putting the thing in this way, true in itself though new to many, that you cannot expect perfection for fourteen, or even for fifty pounds a-year. Has not that way of putting things sometimes checked you when you meditated a sharp reproof, and allayed anger which otherwise would have been pretty hot? Even when a rogue cheats you (though that, I confess, is a peculiarly irritating thing), is not your wrath mollified by putting the thing thus: that the poor wretch probably needed very much the money out of which he cheated you, and would not have cheated you if he could have got it honestly? When a horse-dealer sells you, at a remarkably stiff figure, a broken-winded steed, do not yield to unqualified indignation. True, the horse-dealer is always ready to cheat; but feel for the poor fellow, every man thinks it right to cheat *him*; and with every man's hand against him, what wonder though his hand should be against every man? Everything, you see, turns on the way in which you put things. And it is so from earliest youth to latest age. The old scholar, whose delight is to sit among his books, thus puts his library:—

My days among the dead are passed:

Around me I behold,

Where'er these casual eyes are cast,

The mighty minds of old:

My never-failing friends are they,

With whom I converse night and day.*

* Southey.

You see the library was not mere shelves of books, and the books were not mere printed pages. You remember how Robinson Crusoe, in his cheerful moods, put his island home. He sat down to his lonely meal, but *that* was not how he put things. No. 'Here was my majesty, all alone by myself, attended by my servants: ' his servants being the dog, parrot, and cat. I remember how a wealthy merchant, a man quite of the city as opposed to the country, once talked of emigrating to America, and buying an immense tract of land, where he and his family should lead a simple, unartificial, innocent life. He was not in the least cut out for such a life, and would have been miserable in it, but he was fascinated with the notion because he put it thus: — 'I shall have great flocks and herds, and live in a tent *like Abraham*.' And *that* way of putting things brought up before the busy man of the nineteenth century I know not what sweet picture of a primevally quiet and happy life. I can remember yet how, when I crept about my father's study, a little boy of three years old, I felt the magic of the art of putting things. All children are restless. It is impossible for them to remain still, and we all know how a child in a study worries the busy scholar. All admonitions to keep quiet failed; it was really impossible to obey them. Creep, creep about; upset footstools; pull off table-covers; upset ink. But when the thing was put in a different way; when the kind voice said, — 'Now, you'll be my little dog: creep into your house there under the table, and lie quite still,' there was no difficulty in obeying *that* command: and, except an occasional bow-wow, there was perfect stillness. The art of putting things had prevailed. It was necessary to keep still; for a dog in a study, I knew, must keep still, and I was a dog.

It must be a worrying thing for a great warrior or statesman, fighting a great battle, or introducing a great legislative measure, to remember that the estimation in which he is to be held in his own day and country, and in other countries and ages, depends not at all on what his conduct is in itself, but entirely on the way in which it shall be put before mankind — represented, or misrepresented, in newspapers, in rumours, in histories. How very unlikely it is that history will ever put the ease on its real merits: the characters of history will either be praised far above their deserts, or abused far beyond their sins. ‘Do not read history to me,’ said Sir Robert Walpole, ‘for *that*, I know, must be false.’ History could be no more than the record of the way in which men had agreed to put things; and those behind the scenes, the men who pull the wires which move the puppets, must often have reason to smile at the absurd mistakes into which the history-writing outsiders fall. And even apart from ignorance, or bias, or intention to deceive, what a fearful thought it must be to a great man taking a conspicuous part in some great solemnity, such as the trial of a queen, or the impeachment of a governor-general, to reflect that this great solemnity, and his own share in it, and how he looked, and what he said, may possibly be put before mankind by the great historian Mr. Wordy! One can enter into Johnson’s feeling when, on hearing that Boswell intended to write his biography, he exclaimed, in mingled terror and fury — ‘If I thought that he contemplated writing my life, I should render *that* impossible by taking his!’ It was something to shudder at, the idea of going down to posterity as represented by a Boswell! But the great lexicographer was mistaken: the Dutch-painter-like bi-

ography showed him exactly as he was, the great, little, mighty, weak, manly, babyish mind and heart. And not great men alone, historical personages, have this reason for disquiet and apprehension. Don't you know, my reader not unversed in the ways of life, that it depends entirely on how the story is told, how the thing is represented or misrepresented, whether your conduct on any given occasion shall appear heroic or ridiculous, reasonable or absurd, natural or affected, modest or impudent and don't you know, too, what a vast number of ill-set people are always ready to give the story the unfavourable turn, to put the matter in the bad light; and how many more, not really ill-set, not really with any malicious intention, are prompted by their love of fun, in relating any act of any acquaintance, to try to set it in a ridiculous light? Your domestic establishment is shabby or unpretending, elegant or tawdry, just as the fancy of the moment may lead your neighbour to put the thing. Your equipage is a neat little turn-out or a shabby attempt, your house is quiet or dull, yourself a genius or a blockhead, just as it may strike your friend on the instant to put the thing. And don't we all know some people — not bad people in the main — who never by any chance put the thing except in the unfavourable way? I have heard the selfsame house called a snug little place and a miserable little hole; the same man called a lively talker and an absurd rattlebrain; the same person called a gentlemanlike man and a missy piece of affectation; the same income called competence and starvation; the same horse called a noble animal and an old white cow: — the entire difference, of course, lay in the fashion in which the narrator chose, from inherent *bonhomie* or inherent verjuice, to put the thing.

While Mr. Bright probably regards it as the most ennobling occupation of humanity to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market, Byron said, as implying the lowest degree of degradation —

Trust not for freedom to the Franks, —
They have a king *who buys and sells!*

And it is just the two opposite ways of putting the same admitted fact, to say that Britain is the first mercantile community of the world, and to say that we are a nation of shopkeepers. One way of putting the fact is the dignified, the other is the degrading. If a boy plays truant or falls asleep in church, it just depends on how you put it, or how the story is told, whether you are to see in all this the natural thoughtlessness of boyhood, or a first step towards the gallows. ‘Billy Brown stole some of my apples,’ says a kind-hearted man: ‘well, poor fellow, I daresay he seldom gets any.’ ‘Billy Brown stole my apples,’ says the severe man: ‘ah, the vagabond, he is born to be hanged.’ Sydney Smith put Catholic Emancipation as common justice and common sense: Dr. McNeile puts it as a great national sin, and the origin of the potato disease. John Foster mentions in his *Diary*, that he once expostulated with a great, hulking, stupid bumpkin, as to some gross transgression of which he had been guilty. Little effect was produced on the bumpkin, for dense stupidity is a great duller of the conscience. Foster persisted: ‘Do not you think,’ he said, ‘that the Almighty will be angry at such conduct as yours?’ Blockhead as the fellow was, he could take in the idea of my essay: he replied, ‘That’s just as A tak’s ut!’ But what struck little Paul Dombey as strange, that the same bells rung for weddings and for funerals, and that the same sound was merry or doleful, just as we put it, is true of many

things besides bells. The character of everything we hear or see is reflected upon it from our own minds. The sun *sees* the earth look bright because it first *made* it so. You go to a public meeting, my friend. You make a speech. You get on, you think, uncommonly well. When your auditor Mr. A. or Miss B. goes home, and is asked there what sort of appearance you made, don't you fancy that the reply will be affected in any appreciable degree by the actual fact! It depends entirely on the state of the relator's nerves or digestion, or the passing fancy of the moment, whether you shall be said to have done delightfully or disgustingly; whether you shall be said to have made a brilliant figure, or to have made a fool of yourself. You never can be sure, though you spoke with the tongue of angels, but that ill-nature, peevishness, prejudice, thoughtlessness, may put the case that your speech was most abominable. Do you fancy that you could ever say or do anything that Mr. Snarling could not find fault with, or Miss Limejuice could not misrepresent?

Years ago I was accustomed to frequent the courts of law, and to listen with much interest to the great advocates of that time, as Follett, Wilde, Thesiger, Kelly. Nowhere in the world, I think, is one so deeply impressed with the value of tact and skill in putting things, as in the Court of Queen's Bench at the trial of an important case by a jury. Does not all the enormous difference, as great as that between a country bumpkin and a hog, between Follett and Mr. Briefless, lie simply in their respective powers of putting things? The actual facts, the actual merits of the case, have very little indeed to do with the verdict, compared with the counsel's skill in putting them; the artful marshalling of circum-

stances, the casting weak points into shadow, and bringing out strong points into glaring relief. I remember how I used to look with admiration at one of these great men when, in his speech to the jury, he was approaching some circumstance in the case which made dead against him. It was beautiful to see the intellectual gladiator cautiously approaching the hostile fact; coming up to it, tossing and turning it about, and finally showing that it made strongly in his favour. Now, if that were really so, why did it look as if it made against him? Why should so much depend on the way in which he put it? Or, if the fact was in truth one that made against him, why should it be possible for a man to put it so that it should seem to make in his favour, and all without any direct falsification of facts or arguments, without any of that mere vulgar misrepresentation which can be met by direct contradiction? Surely it is not a desirable state of matters, that a plausible fellow should be able to explain away some very doubtful conduct of his own, and by skilful putting of things should be able to make it seem even to the least discerning, that he is the most innocent and injured of human beings. And it is provoking, too, when you feel at once that his defence is a mere intellectual juggle, and yet, with all your logic, when you cannot just on the instant tear it to pieces, and put the thing in the light of truth. Indeed, so well is it understood that by tact and address you may so put things as to make the worse appear the better reason, that the idea generally conveyed, when we talk of putting things, is, that there is something wrong, something to be adroitly concealed, some weak point in regard to which dust is to be thrown into too observant eyes. There is a common impression, not one of unqualified truth, that when all is above board, there

is less need for skilful putting of the case. Many people think, though the case is by no means so, that truth may always be depended on to tell its own story and produce its due impression. Not a bit of it. However good my case might be, I should be sorry to intrust it to Mr. Numskull, with Sir Fitzroy Kelly on the other side.

It is a coarse and stupid expedient to have recourse to anything like falsification in putting things as they would make best for yourself, reader. And there is no need for it. Unless you have absolutely killed a man and taken his watch, or done something equally decided, you can easily represent circumstances so as to throw a favourable light upon yourself and your conduct. It is a mistake to fancy that in this world a story must be either true or false, a deed either right or wrong, a man either good or bad. There are few questions which can be answered by Yes or No. Almost all actions and events are of mingled character; and there is something to be said on both sides of almost every subject which can be debated. Who does not remember how, when he was a boy, and had done some mischief which he was too honest to deny, he revolved all he had done over and over, putting it in many lights, trying it in all possible points of view, till he had persuaded himself that he had done quite right, or at least that he had done nothing that was so very wrong, after all? There was a lurking feeling, probably, that all this was self-deception; and oh! how our way of putting the case, so favourably to ourselves, vanished into air when our Teacher and Governor sternly called us to account! All those jesuitical artifices were forgotten; and we just felt that we had done wrong, and there was no use trying to justify it.

The noble use of the power of putting things, is when

a man employs that power to give tenfold force to truth. When you go and hear a great preacher, you sometimes come away wishing heartily that the impression he made on you would last: for you feel that though what struck you so much was not the familiar doctrine, which you knew quite well before, but the way in which he put it, still that startling view of things was the right view. Probably in the pulpit more than anywhere else, we feel the difference between a man who talks about and about things — and another man who puts them so that we *feel* them. And when one thinks of all the ignorance, want, and misery which surround us in the wretched dwellings of the poor, which we know all about but take so coolly, it is sad to remember that Truth does not make itself felt as it really is, but depends so sadly for the practical effect upon the skill with which it is put — upon the tact, graphic power, and earnest purpose of the man who tells it. A landed proprietor will pass a wretched row of cottages on his estate daily for years, yet never think of making an effort to improve them: who, when the thing is fairly put to him, will forthwith bestir himself to have things brought into a better state. He will wonder how he could have allowed matters to go on in that unhappy style so long; but will tell you truly, that though the thing was before his eyes, he really never before thought of it in that light.

Some people have a happy knack for putting in a pleasant way everything that concerns themselves. Mr. A.'s son gets a poor place as a Bank clerk: his father goes about saying that the lad has found a fine opening in business. The young man is ordained, and gets a curacy on Salisbury Plain: his father rejoices that there, never seeing a human face, he has abundant leisure for study.

and for improving his mind. Or, the curacy is in the most crowded part of Manchester or Bethnal Green: the father now rejoices that his son has opportunities of acquiring clerical experience, and of visiting the homes of the poor. Such a man's house is in a well-wooded country: the situation is delightfully sheltered. He removes to a bare district without a tree:—ah! there he has beautiful pure air and extensive views. It is well for human beings when they have the pleasant art of *thus* putting things; for many, we all know, have the art of putting things in just the opposite way. They look at all things through jaundiced eyes; and as things appear to themselves, so they put them to others. You remember, reader, how once upon a time David Hume, the historian, kindly sent Rousseau a present of a dish of beef-steaks. Rousseau fired at this: he discerned in it a deep-laid insult: he *put it* that Hume, by sending the steaks, meant to insinuate that he, Rousseau, could not afford to buy proper food for himself. Ah, I have known various Rousseaus! They had not the genius, indeed, but they had all the wrongheadedness.

Who does not know the contrasted views of mankind and of life that pervade all the writings of Dickens and of Thackeray? It is the same world that lies before both, but how differently they put it! And look at the accounts in the Blue and Yellow newspapers respectively, of the borough Member's speech to his constituents last night in the Corn Exchange. Judge by the account in the one paper, and he is a Burke for eloquence, a Peel for tact, a Shippen for incorruptible integrity. Judge by the account in the other, and you would wonder where the electors caught a mortal who combines so remarkably ignorance, stupidity, carelessness, inefficiency, and dishonesty. As

for the speech, one journal declares it was fluent, the other that it was stuttering ; one that it was frank, the other that it was trimming ; one that it was sense, the other that it was nonsense. Nor need it be supposed that either journal intends deliberate falsehood. Each believes his own way of putting the case to be the right way ; and the truth, in most instances, doubtless lies midway between. But in fact, till the end of time, there will be at least two ways of putting everything. Perhaps the M. P. warmed with his subject, and threw himself heart and soul into his speech. Shall we say that he spoke with eloquent energy, or shall we put it that he bellowed like a bull ? Was he quiet and correct ? Then we may choose between saying that he is a classical speaker, and that he was as stiff as a poker. He made some jokes, perhaps. take your choice whether you shall call him clever or flippant, a wit or a buffoon. And so of everybody else. You know a clever, well-read young woman : you may either call her such, or talk sneeringly of blue-stockings. You meet a lively, merry girl, who laughs and talks with all the frankness of innocence. *You* would say of her, my kindly reader, something like what I have just said ; but crabbed Mrs. Backbite will have it that she is a romp, a boisterous hoyden, of most unformed manners. Perhaps Mrs. Backbite, spitefully shaking her head, says she trusts, she really hopes, there is no harm in the girl — but certainly no daughter of *hers* should be allowed to associate with her. And not merely does the way, favourable or unfavourable, in which the thing shall be put, depend mainly on the temperament of the person who puts it — so that you shall know beforehand that Mr. Snarling will always give the unfavourable view, and Mr. Jollikin the favourable : but a further element of disturbance is

introduced by the fact, that often the narrator's mood is such, that it is a toss-up, five minutes before he begins to tell his story, whether he shall put the conduct of his hero as good or bad.

Who needs the art of putting things more than the painter of portraits? Who sees so much of the littleness, the petty vanity, the silliness, of mankind? It must be hard for such a man to retain much respect for human nature. The lurking belief in the mind of every man, that he is remarkably good-looking, concealed in daily intercourse with his fellows, breaks out in the painter's studio. And, without positive falsification, how cleverly the artist often contrives to put the features and figure of his sitter in a satisfactory fashion! Have not you seen the portrait of a plain, and even a very ugly person, which was strikingly like, and still very pleasant looking and almost pretty? Have not you seen things so skilfully put, that the little snob looked dignified, the vulgar boor gentlemanlike, the plain-featured woman angelic — and all the while the likeness was accurately preserved?

It seems to me that in the case of many of those fine things which stir the heart and bring moisture to the eye, it depends entirely on the way in which they are put, whether they shall strike us as pathetic or silly, as sublime or ridiculous. The venerable aspect of the dethroned monarch, led in the triumphal procession of the Roman Emperor, and looking indifferently on the scene, as he repeated often the words of Solomon, 'Vanity, vanity, all is vanity,' depends much for the effect it always produces on the reader, upon the stately yet touching fashion in which Gibbon tells the story. So with Hazlitt's often-recurring account of Poussin's celebrated picture, the *Et in Arcadiâ Ego*. As for Burke flinging the

dagger upon the floor of the House of Commons, and Brougham falling on his knees in the House of Peers, what a ridiculous representation *Punch* could give of such things! What shall be said of Addison, often tipsy in life, yet passing away with the words addressed to his regardless step-son, 'See in what peace a Christian can die!' We need not think of things which are essentially ridiculous, though their perpetrators intended them to be sublime: as Lord Ellenborough's proclamation about the Gates of Somnauth, Sir William Codrington's despatch as to the blowing up of Sebastopol, and all the grand passages in the writings of Mr. Wordy. Let me confess that I do think it a very unhealthy sign of the times, this love which now exists of putting grave matters in a ridiculous light, which produces *Comic Histories of England*, *Comic Blackstones*, *Comic Parliamentary Debates*, *Comic Latin Grammars*, and the like. Dreary indeed must be the fun of such books; but *that* is not the worst of them. Yet one cannot seriously object to such a facetious serial as *Punch*, which represents the funny element in our sad insular character. *Punch* lives by the art of putting things, and putting them in a single way; but how wonderfully well, how successfully, how genially, he puts all things funnily! But to burlesque *Macbeth* or *Othello*, to travesty Virgil, to parody the soliloquy in *Hamlet*, though it may be putting things in a novel and amusing way, approaches to the nature of sacrilege. Sometimes, indeed, the ludicrous way of putting things has served an admirable purpose; as in the imitations of Southey's Sapphics and Kotzebue's morality in the *Poetry of the Anti-jacobin*. And the ludicrous way of putting things has sometimes brought them much more vividly home to 'men's business and bosoms,' as in Syd-

ney Smith's description of the possible results of a French invasion. Nor has it failed to answer the end of most cogent argument, as in his description of Mrs. Partington sweeping back the Atlantic Ocean.

Do not fancy, my friend, that you can by possibility so live that ill-natured folk will not be able to put everything you do unfavorably. The old man with the ass was a martyr to the desire so to act that there should be no possibility of putting what he did as wrong. And when John Gilpin's wife, for fear the neighbours should think her proud, caused the chaise to draw up five doors off, rely upon it some of the neighbours would say she did so in the design of making her carriage the more conspicuous. When you give a dinner-party, and after your guests are gone, sit down and review the progress of the entertainment, thinking how nicely everything went on, do you remember, madam, that at that same moment your guests are seated in their own homes, putting all the circumstances in quite a different way: laughing at your hired greengrocer, who (you were just saying) looked so like a butler; execrating your champagne, which (you are this moment flattering yourself) passed for the product of the grape and not of the gooseberry; and generally putting yourself, your children, your house, your dinner, your company, your music, into such ridiculous lights, that, if you knew it (which happily you never will), you would wish that you had mingled a little strychnine with the vintage so vilified. Still, it is pleasant to believe that there is no real malice in the way in which most people cut up their friends behind their backs. You really have a very kindly feeling towards Mr. A. or Mrs. B., though you *do* turn them into ridicule in their absence. After laughing at Mr. A. to

Mrs. B., you are quite ready to laugh at Mrs. B. to Mr. A. The truth appears to be, that all this is an instance of that reaction which is necessary to human beings. In people's presence politeness requires that you should put everything that concerns them in the most agreeable and favourable way. Impatient of this constraint, you revenge yourself upon it whenever circumstances permit, by putting things in the opposite fashion. I feel not the least enmity towards Mr. Snooks for saying behind my back that my essays are wretched trash. He has frequently said in my presence that they are far superior to anything ever written by Macaulay, Milton, or Shakespeare. I knew that after my dear friend's civility had been subjected to so violent a strain as was implied in his making the latter declaration, it would of necessity fly back, like a released bow, whenever he left me ; and that the first mutual acquaintance he met would have the satisfaction of hearing the case put in a very different way. And no doubt, if my dear friend were put upon his oath, his true opinion of me would transpire as nearly midway between the two ways of putting it respectively before my face and behind my back.

You are a country clergyman, let us say, my reader, with a small parish ; and while you do your duty faithfully and zealously, you spend a spare hour now and then upon a review or a magazine article. You like the thought that thus, from your remote solitude, you are addressing a larger audience than that which you address Sunday by Sunday. You think that reasonable and candid people would say that this is an improving and pleasant way of employing a little leisure time, instead of rusting into stupidity or mooning about blankly, or smoking yourself into vacancy, or reading novels, or listening

to and retailing gossip, or hanging about the streets of the neighbouring county town, or growing sarcastic and misanthropic. But don't you remember, my dear friend, that although *you* put the case in this way, it is highly probable that some of your acquaintanees, whose professed contributions to the periodical with which you are supposed to be connected have been 'declined with thanks,' and whom malignant editors exclude from the opportunity of enlightening an ungrateful world, may put the matter very differently indeed? True, you are always thoroughly prepared with your sermon on Sundays, you are assiduous in your care of the sick and the aged, you have cottage lectures here and there throughout the parish, you teach classes of children and young people, you know familiarly the face and the circumstances of every soul of your population, and you honestly give your heart and strength to your sacred calling, suffering nothing whatever to interfere with *that*: but do you fancy that all this diligence will prevent Miss Lemonjuice and Mr. Flyblow from exclaiming, 'Ah, see Mr. Smith; isn't it dreadful? See how he neglects his proper work, and spends his time, his *whole* time, in writing articles for the *Quarterly Review*! It's disgraceful! The bishop, if he did his duty, would pull him up!'

A striking instance of the effect of skilfully putting things may be found in the diary of Warren Hastings. The great Governor-General always insisted that his conduct of Indian affairs had been just and beneficent, and that the charges brought by Burke and Sheridan were without foundation in truth. He declared that he had that conviction in the centre of his being; that he was as sure of it as of his own existence. But as he listened to the opening speech of Burke, he tells us he

saw things in a new light. He felt the spell of the way in which the great orator put things. Could this really be the right way? 'For half an hour,' says Hastings, 'I looked up at Burke in a reverie of wonder, and during that time I actually felt myself the most guilty being upon earth!' But Hastings adds that he did what the boy who has played truant does — he took refuge in his own way of putting things. 'I resorted to my own heart, and there found what sustained me under all this accusation.'

A young lad's choice of a profession depends mainly upon the way in which the life of that profession is put before him. If a boy is to go to the bar, it will be expedient to make the Chancellorship the prominent feature in the picture presented to him. It will be better to keep in the background the lonely evenings in the chambers at the Temple, the weary back-benches in court, the heart-sickening waiting year after year. And the first impression, strongly rooted, will probably last. I love my own profession. I would exchange its life and its work for no other position on earth; but I feel that I owe part of its fascination to the fragrance of boyish fancies of it which linger yet. Blessed be the kind and judicious parent or preceptor, whose skilful putting of things long ago has given to our vocation, whatever it may be, a charm which can overcome the disgust which might otherwise come of the hard realities, the little daily worries, the discouragements and frustrated hopes! How much depends on first impressions — on the way in which a man, a place, a book is put to us for the first time! Something of cheerlessness and dreariness will always linger about even the summer aspect of the house which you first approached when the winter afternoon was closing in, dark, gusty, cold, miserable-looking. What a difference it makes to

the little man who is to have a tooth pulled out, whether the dentist approaches with a grievous look, in silence, with the big forceps conspicuous in his hand ; or comes up cheerfully, with no display of steel, and says, with a smiling face, ‘ Come, my little friend, it will be over in a moment ; you will hardly have time to feel it ; you will stand it like a brick, and mamma will be proud of having such a brave little boy ! ’ Or, if either man or boy has a long task to go through, how much more easily it will be done if it is put in separate divisions than if it is set before one all in a mass ! *Divide et impera* states a grand principle in the art of putting things. If your servant is to clear away a mass of snow, he will do it in half the time and with twice the pleasure if you first mark it out into squares, to be cleared away one after the other. By the make of our being we like to have many starts and many arrivals : it does not do to look too far on without a break. I remember the driver of a mail-coach telling me, as I sat on the box through a sixty mile drive, that it would weary him to death to drive that road daily if it were as straight as a railway : he liked the turnings and windings, which put the distance in the form of successive bits. It was sound philosophy in Sydney Smith to advise us, whether physically or morally, to ‘ take short views.’ It would knock you up at once if, when the railway-carriage moved out of the station at Edinburgh, you began to trace in your mind’s eye the whole route to London. Never do that. Think first of Dunbar, then of Newcastle, then of York, and putting the thing thus, you will get over the distance without fatigue of mind. What little child would have heart to begin the alphabet, if, before he did so, you put clearly before him all the school and college work of which it is the beginning ? The poor little

thing would knock up at once, wearied out by your want of skill in putting things. And so it is that Providence, kindly and gradually putting things, wiles us onward, still keeping hope and heart, through the trials and cares of life. Ah, if we had had it put to us at the outset how much we should have to go through, to reach even our present stage in life, we should have been ready to think it the best plan to sit down and die at once! But, in compassion for human weakness, the Great Director and Shower of events practises the Art of Putting Things. Might we not sometimes do so when we do not? When we see some poor fellow grumbling at his lot, and shirking his duty, might not a little skill employed in putting these things in a proper light serve better than merely expressing our contempt or indignation? A single sentence might make him see that what he was complaining of was reasonable and right. It is quite wonderful from what odd and perverse points of view people will look at things: and then things look so very different. The hill behind your house, which you have seen a thousand times, you would not know if you approached it from some unwonted quarter. Now, if you see a man afflicted with a perverse twist of mind, making him put things in general or something in particular in a wrong way, you do him a much kinder turn in directing him how to put things rightly, than if you were a skilful surgeon and cured him of the most fearful squint that ever hid behind blue spectacles.

Did not Franklin go to hear Whitefield preach a charity sermon resolved not to give a penny; and was he not so thoroughly overcome by the great preacher's way of putting the claims of the charity which he was advocating, that he ended by emptying his pockets into the plate?

I daresay Alexander the Great was somewhat staggered in his plans of conquest by Parmenio's way of putting things. 'After you have conquered Persia, what will you do?' 'Then I shall conquer India.' 'After you have conquered India, what will you do?' 'Conquer Scythia.' 'And after you have conquered Scythia, what will you do?' 'Sit down and rest.' 'Well,' said Parmenio to the conqueror, 'why not sit down and rest now?' I trust young Sheridan was proof against his father's way of putting things, when the young man said he meant to go down a coalpit. 'Why go down a coalpit?' said Sheridan the elder. 'Merely to be able to say I have been there.' 'You blockhead,' replied the high-principled sire, 'what is there to keep you from saying so without going?'

I remember witnessing a decided success of the art of putting things. A vulgar rich man, who had recently bought an estate in Aberdeenshire, exclaimed, 'It is monstrous hard; I have just had this morning to pay forty pounds of stipend to the parish minister for my property. Now, I never enter the parish church (nor any other, he might have added), and why should I pay to maintain a Church to which I don't belong?' I omit the oaths which served as sauce. Now, that was Mr. Oddbody's way of putting things, and you would say his case was a hard one. But a quiet man who was present changed the aspect of matters. 'Is it not true, Mr. Oddbody,' he said, 'that when you bought your estate, its rental was reckoned after deducting the payment you mention; that the exact value of your annual payment to the minister was calculated, and the amount deducted from the price you paid for the property? And is it not therefore true, that not a penny of that forty pounds

really comes out of your pocket?’ Mr. Oddbody’s face elongated. The bystanders unequivocally signified what they thought of him; and as long as he lived he never failed to be remembered as the man who had tried to extort sympathy by false pretences.

To no man is tact in putting things more essential than to the clergyman. An injudicious and unskilful preacher may so put the doctrines which he sets forth as to make them appear revolting and absurd. It is a fearful thing to hear a stupid fellow preaching upon the doctrine of Election. He may so put that doctrine that he shall fill every clever young lad who hears him with prejudices against Christianity, which may last through life. And in advising one’s parishioners, especially in administering reproof where needful, let the parish priest, if he would do good, call into play all his tact. With the best intentions, through lack of skill in putting things, he may do great mischief. Let the calomel be concealed beneath the jelly. Not that I counsel sneakiness; *that* is worse than the most indiscreet honesty. There is no need to put things, like the Dean immortalized by Pope, who when preaching in the Chapel Royal, said to his hearers that unless they led religious lives they would ultimately reach a place ‘which he would not mention in so polite an assembly.’ Nor will it be expedient to put things like the contemptible wretch who, preaching before Louis XIV., said *Nous mourrons tous*; then, turning to the king, and bowing humbly, *presque tous*. And it is only in addressing quite exceptional congregations that it would now-a-days be regarded as a piece of proper respect for the mighty of the earth, were the preacher, in stating that all who heard him were sinners, to add, by way of reservation, all who have less than a thousand a year

Any man who approaches the matter with a candid spirit, must be much struck by the difference between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic ways of putting the points at issue between the two great Churches. The Roman prayers are in Latin, for instance. A violent Protestant says that the purpose is to keep the people in ignorance. A strong Romanist tells you that Latin was the universal language of educated men when these prayers were drawn up; and puts it that it is a fine thing to think that in all Romish churches over Christendom the devotions of the people are expressed in the selfsame words. Take keeping back the Bible from the people. To us nothing appears more flagrant than to deprive any man of God's written word. Still the Romanist has something to say for himself. He puts it that there is so much difficulty in understanding much of the Bible — that such pernicious errors have followed from false interpretations of it. Think, even, of the dogma of the infallibility of the Church. The Protestant puts that dogma as an instance of unheard-of arrogance. The Romanist puts it as an instance of deep humility and earnest faith. He says he does not hold that the Church, in her own wisdom, is able to keep infallibly right; but he says that he has perfect confidence that God will not suffer the Church deliberately to fall into error. Here, certainly, we have two very different ways of putting the same things.

But who shall say that there are no more than two ways of putting any incident, or any opinion, or any character? There are innumerable ways — ways as many as are the idiosyncrasies of the men that put them. You have to describe an event, have you? Then you may put it in the plain matter-of-fact way, like the *Times'* re-

porter ; or in the sublime way, like Milton and Mr. Wordy ; or in the ridiculous way, like *Punch* (of design), and Mr. Wordy (unintentionally) ; or in the romantic way, like Mr. G. P. R. James ; or in the minutely circumstantial way, like Defoe or Poe ; or in the affectedly simple way, like *Peter Bell* ; or in the forcible, knowing way, like Macaulay ; or in the genial, manly, good-humoured way, like Sydney Smith ; or in the flippant way, like Mr. Richard Swiveller, who when he went to ask for an old gentleman, inquired as to the health of the ' ancient buffalo ; ' or in the lackadaisical way, like many young ladies ; or in the whining, grumbling way, like many silly people whom it is unnecessary to name : or in the pretentious, lofty way, introducing familiarly many titled names without the least necessity, like many natives of beautiful Erin.

What nonsense it is to say, as it has been said, that the effect of anything spoken or written depends upon the essential thought alone ! Why, nine-tenths of the practical power depends on the way in which it is put. Somebody has asserted that any thought which is not eloquent in any words whatever, is not eloquent at all. He might as well have said that black was white. Not to speak of the charm of the mere music of gracefully modulated words, and felicitously arranged phrases, how much there is in beautifully logical treatment, and beautifully clear development, that will interest a cultivated man in a speech or a treatise, quite irrespective of its subject. I have known a very eminent man say that it was a delight to him to hear Follett make a speech, he did not care about what. The matter was no matter ; the intellectual treat was to watch how the great advocate put it. And we have all read with delight stories with

no incident and little character, yet which derived a nameless fascination from the way in which they were told. Tell me truly, my fair reader, did you not shed some tears over Dickens's story of Richard Doubledick? Could you have read that story aloud without breaking down? And yet, was there ever a story with less in it? But how beautifully Dickens put what little there was, and how the melody of the closing sentences of the successive paragraphs lingers on the ear! And you have not forgotten the exquisite touches with which Mrs. Stowe put so simple a matter as a mother looking into her dead baby's drawer. I have known an attempt at the pathetic made on a kindred topic provoke yells of laughter; but I could not bear the woman, and hardly the man, who could read Mrs. Stowe's putting of that simple conception without the reverse of smiles. Many readers, too, will not forget how more sharply they have seen many places and things, from railway engine sheds to the Britannia Bridge, when put by the graphic pen of Sir Francis Head. That lively baronet is the master of clear, sharp presentment.

I have not hitherto spoken of such ways of putting things as were practised in King Hudson's railway reports, or in those of the Glasgow Western Bank, cooked to make things pleasant by designed misrepresentation. So far we have been thinking of comparatively innocent variations in the ways of putting things — of putting the best foot foremost in a comparatively honest way. But how much intentional misrepresentation there is in British society! How few people can tell a thing exactly as they saw it! It goes in one colour, and comes out another, like light through tinted glass. It is rather amusing, by the way, when a friend comes and tells you a story which

he heard from yourself, but so put that you hardly know it again. Unscrupulous putters of things should have good memories. There is no reckoning the ways in which, by varying the turn of an expression, by a tone or look, an entirely false view may be given of a conversation, a transaction, or an event. A lady says to her cook, You are by no means overworked. The cook complains in the servants' hall that her mistress said she had nothing to do. Lies, in the sense of pure inventions, are not common, I believe, among people with any claim to respectability; but it is perfectly awful to think how great a part of ordinary conversation, especially in little country towns, consists in putting things quite differently from the actual fact; in short, of wilful misrepresentation. Many people cannot resist the temptation to deepen the colours, and strengthen the lines, of any narration, in order to make it more telling. Unluckily, things usually occur in life in such a manner as just to miss what would give them a point and make a good story of them; and the temptation is strong to make them, by the deflection of a hair's breadth, what they ought to have been.

It is sad to think, that in ninety-nine out of every hundred cases in which things are thus untruly put, the representation is made worse than the reality. Few old ladies endeavour, by their imaginative putting of things, to exhibit their acquaintances as wiser, better, and more amiable, than the fact. An exception may be made whenever putting her friends and their affairs in a dignified light would reflect credit upon the old lady herself. *Then*, indeed, their income is vast, their house is magnificent, their horses are Eclipses, their conversation is brilliant, their attention to their friends unwearying and indescribable. Alas for our race: that we lean to evil rather than

to good, and that it is so much more easy and piquant to pitch into a man than to praise him !

Let us rejoice that there is one happy case in which the way of putting things, though often false, is always favourable. I mean the accounts which are given in country newspapers of the character and the doings of the great men of the district. I often admire the country editor's skill in putting all things (save the speech of the opposition M. P., as already mentioned) in such a rosy light ; nor do I admire his genial *bonhomie* less than his art. If a marquis makes a stammering speech, it is sure to be put as most interesting and eloquent. If the rector preaches a dull and stupid charity sermon, it is put as striking and effective. A public meeting, consisting chiefly of empty benches, is put as most respectably attended. A gift of a little flannel and coals at Christmas-time, is put as seasonable munificence. A bald and seedy building, just erected in the High-street, is put as chaste and classical ; an extravagant display of gingerbread decoration is put as gorgeous and magnificent. In brief, what other men heartily wish this world were, the conductors of local prints boldly declare that it is. Whatever they think a great man would like to be called, *that* they make haste to call him. Happy fellows, if they really believe that they live in such a world and among such beings as they put ! Their gushing heart is too much for even their sharp head, and they see all things glorified by the sunshine of their own exceeding amiability.

The subject greatens on me, but the paper dwindles : the five-and-forty fair expanses of foolscap are darkened at last. It would need a volume, not an essay, to do this matter justice. Sir Bulwer Lytton has declared, in


pages charming but too many, that the world's great question is, **WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?** I shall not debate the point, but simply add, that only second to that question in comprehensive reach and in practical importance is the question — **HOW WILL HE PUT IT?**



CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING TWO BLISTERS OF HUMANITY

BEING THOUGHTS ON PETTY MALIGNITY AND
PETTY TRICKERY.

T is highly improbable that any reader of ordinary power of imagination, would guess the particular surface on which the paper is spread whereon I am at the present moment writing. Such is the reflection which flows naturally from my pencil's point as it begins to darken this page. I am seated on a manger, in a very light and snug stable, and my paper is spread upon a horse's face, occupying the flat part between the eyes. You would not think, unless you tried, what an extensive superficies may there be found. If you put a thin book next the horse's skin, you will write with the greater facility: and you will find, as you sit upon the edge of the manger, that the animal's head occupies a position which, as regards height and slope, is sufficiently convenient. His mouth, it may be remarked, is not far from your knees, so that it would be highly inexpedient to attempt the operation with a vicious, biting brute, or indeed with any horse of whose temper you are not well assured. But you, my good Old Boy (for such is the quadruped's name), *you* would not bite your master. Too many carrots have you received from his hand; too

many picces of bread have you licked up from his extended palm. A thought has struck me which I wish to preserve in writing, though indeed at this rate it will be a long time before I work my way to it. I am waiting here for five minutes till my man-servant shall return with something for which he has been sent, and wherefore should even five minutes be wasted? Life is not very long, and the minutes in which one can write with ease are not very many. And perhaps the newness of such a place of writing may communicate something of freshness to what is traced by a somewhat jaded hand. You winced a little, Old Boy, as I disposed my book and this scrap of an old letter on your face, but now you stand perfectly still. On either side of this page I see a large eye looking down wistfully; above the page a pair of ears are cocked in quiet euriosity, but with no indication of fear. Not that you are deficient in spirit, my dumb friend; you will do your twelve miles an hour with any steed within some miles of you; but a long course of kindness has gentled you as well as Mr. Rarey could have done, though no more than seven summers have passed over your head. Let us ever, kindly reader, look with especial sympathy and regard at any inferior animal on which the doom of man has fallen, and which must eat its food, if not in the sweat of its brow, then in that of its sides. Curious, that a creature should be called all through life to labour, for which yet there remains no rest! As for us human beings, we can understand and we can bear with much evil, and many trials and sorrows here, because we are taught that all these form the discipline which shall prepare us for another world, a world that shall set this right. But for you, my poor fellow-creature, I think with sorrow as I write here

upon your head, there remains no such immortality as remains for me. What a difference between us! You to your sixteen or eighteen years here, and then oblivion. I to my threescore and ten, and then eternity! Yes, the difference is immense; and it touches me to think of your life and mine, of your doom and mine. I know a house where, at morning and evening prayer, when the household assembles, among the servants there always walks in a certain shaggy little dog, who listens with the deepest attention and the most solemn gravity to all that is said, and then, when prayers are over, goes out again with his friends. I cannot witness that silent procedure without being much moved by the sight. Ah, my fellow-creature, *this* is something in which you have no part! Made by the same Hand, breathing the same air, sustained like us by food and drink, you are witnessing an act of ours which relates to interests that do not concern you, and of which you have no idea. And so, here we are, you standing at the manger, Old Boy, and I sitting upon it; the mortal and the immortal; close together; your nose on my knee, my paper on your head; yet with something between us broader than the broad Atlantic. As for you, if you suffer here, there is no other life to make up for it. Yet it would be well if many of those who are your betters in the scale of creation, fulfilled their Creator's purposes as well as you. He gave you strength and swiftness, and you use these to many a valuable end: not many of the superior race will venture to say that they turn the powers God gave them to account as worthy of their nature. If it come to the question of deserving, you deserve better than me. Forgive me, my fellow-creature, if I have sometimes given you an angry flick, when you shied a little at a

pig or a donkey. But I know you bear me no malice ; you forget the flicks (they are not many), and you think rather of the bread and the carrots, of the times I have pulled your ears, and smoothed your neck, and patted your nose. And forasmuch as this is all your life, I shall do my very best to make it a comfortable one. *Happiness*, of course, is something which you can never know. Yet, my friend and companion through many weary miles, you shall have a deep-littered stall, and store of eorn and hay so long as I can give them ; and may this hand never write another line if it ever does you wilful injury !

Into this paragraph has my pencil of its own accord rambled, though it was taken up to write about something else. And such is the happiness of the writer of essays : he may wander about the world of thought at his will. The style of the essayist has attained what may be esteemed the perfection of freedom, when it permits him, in writing upon any subject whatsoever, to say whatever may occur to him upon any other subject. And truly it is a pleasing thing for one long trammelled by the requirements of a rigorous logic, and fettered by thoughts of symmetry, connexion, and neatness in the discussion of his topic, to enter upon a fresh field where all these things go for nothing, and to write for readers many of whom would never notice such characteristics if they were present, nor ever miss them if they were absent. There is all the difference between plodding wearily along the dusty highway, and rambling through green fields, and over country stiles, leisurely, saunteringly, going nowhere in particular. You would not wish to be always desultory and rambling, but it is pleasant to be so now and then. And there is a delightful freedom

about the feeling that you are producing an entirely unsymmetrical composition. It is fearful work, if you have a thousand thoughts and shades of thought about any subject, to get them all arranged in what a logician would call their proper places. It is like having a dissected puzzle of a thousand pieces given you in confusion, and being required to fit all the little pieces of ivory into their box again. By most men this work of orderly and symmetrical composition can be done well only by its being done comparatively slowly. In the case of ordinary folk the mind is a machine, which may indeed, by putting on extra pressure, be worked faster; but the result is the deterioration of the material which it turns off. It is an extraordinary gift of nature and training, when a man is like Follett, who, after getting the facts of an involved and intricate case into his mind only at one or two o'clock in the morning, could appear in Court at nine A. M., and there proceed to state the case and all his reasonings upon it, with the very perfection of logical method, every thought in its proper place, and all this at the rate of rapid extempore speaking. The difference between the rate of writing and that of speaking, with most men, makes the difference between producing good material and bad. A great many minds can turn off a fair manufacture at the rate of writing, which, when overdriven to keep pace with speaking, will bring forth very poor stuff indeed. And besides this, most people cannot grasp a large subject in all its extent and its bearings, and get their thoughts upon it marshalled and sorted, unless they have at least two or three days to do so. At first all is confusion and indefiniteness, but gradually things settle into order. Hardly any mind, by any effort, can get them into order quickly. If at all, it is by a

tremendous exertion ; whereas the mind has a curious power, without any perceptible effort, of arranging in order thoughts upon any subject, if you give it time. Who that has ever written his ideas on some involved point but knows this ? You begin by getting up information on the subject about which you are to write. You throw into the mind, as it were, a great heap of crude, unordered material. From this book and that book, from this review and that newspaper, you collect the observations of men who have regarded your subject from quite different points of view, and for quite different purposes ; you throw into the mind cartload after cartload of facts and opinions, with a despairing wonder how you will ever be able to get that huge, contradictory, vague mass into anything like shape and order. And if, the minute you had all your matter accumulated, you were called on to state what you knew or thought upon the subject, you could not do so for your life in any satisfactory manner. You would not know where to begin, or how to go on ; it would be all confusion and bewilderment. Well, do not make the slightest effort. What is impossible now will be quite easy by and bye. The peas, which cost a sovereign a pint at Christmas, are quite cheap in their proper season. Go about other things for three or four days : and at the end of that time you will be aware that the machinery of your mind, voluntarily and almost unconsciously playing, has sorted and arranged that mass of matter which you threw into it. Where all was confusion and uncertainty, all is now order and clearness ; and you see exactly where to begin, and what to say next, and where and how to leave off.

The probability is, that all this has not been done without an effort, and a considerable amount of labour. But

then, instead of the labour having been all at once, it has been very much subdivided. The subject was simmering in your mind all the while, though you were hardly aware of it. Time after time, you took a little run at it, and saw your way a little farther through it. But this multitude of little separate and momentary efforts does not count for much; though in reality, if they were all put together, they would probably be found to have amounted to as much as the prolonged exertion which would at a single heat have attained the end. A large result, attained by innumerable little, detached efforts, seems as if it had been attained without any effort at all.

I love a parallel case; and I must take such cases from my ordinary experience. Yesterday, passing a little cottage by the wayside, I perceived at the door the carcase of a very large pig extended on a table. Approaching, as is my wont, the tenant of the cottage and owner of the pig, I began to converse with him on the size and fatness of the poor creature which had that morning quitted its sty forever. It had been *shot*, he told me; for such, in these parts, is at present the most approved way of securing for swine an end as little painful as may be. I admired the humanity of the intention, and hoped that it might be crowned with success. Then my friend, the proprietor of the bacon, began to discourse on the philosophy of the rearing of pigs by labouring men. No doubt, he said, the four pounds, or thereabout, which he would get for his pig, would be a great help to a hard-working man with five or six little children. But after all, he remarked, it was likely enough that during the months of the pig's life, it had bit by bit consumed and cost him as much as he would get for it now. But then, he went on, it cost us *that* in little sums we hardly felt; while the

four pounds it will sell for come all in a lump, and seem to give a very perceptible profit. Successive unfelt sixpences had mounted up to that considerable sum; even as five hundred little unfelt mental efforts had mounted up to the large result of sorting and methodizing the mass of crude fact and opinion of which we were thinking a little while ago.

Having worked through this preliminary matter (which will probably be quite enough for some readers, even as the Solan goose which does but whet the appetite of the Highlander, annihilates that of the Sassenach), I now come to the subject which was in my mind when I began to write on the horse's head. I am not in the stable now; for the business which detained me there is long since despatched: and after all, it is more convenient to write at one's study-table. I wish to say something concerning certain evils which press upon humanity; and which are to the feeling of the mind very much what a mustard-blister is to the feeling of the body. To the healthy man or woman they probably do not do much serious harm; but they maintain a very constant irritation. They worry and annoy. It is extremely interesting, in reading the published diaries of several great and good men, to find them recording on how many days they were put out of sorts, vexed and irritated, and rendered unfit for their work of writing, by some piece of petty malignity or petty trickery. How well one can sympathize with that good and great, and honest and amiable and sterling man, Dr. Chalmers, when we find him recording in his diary, when he was a country parish minister, how he was unable to make satisfactory progress with his sermon one whole forenoon, because some tricky and over-reaching farmer in the neighbourhood drove two

calves into a field of his glebe, where the great man found them in the morning devouring his fine young clover ! There was something very irritating and annoying in the paltry dishonesty. And the sensitive machinery of the good man's mind could not work sweetly when the gritty grains of the small vexation were fretting its polished surface. Let it be remarked in passing, that the peculiar petty dishonesty of driving cattle into a neighbouring proprietor's field, is far from being an uncommon one. And let me inform such as have suffered from it of a remedy against it which has never been known to fail. If the trespassing animals be cows, wait till the afternoon : then have them well milked, and send them home. If horses, let them instantly be put in carts, and sent off ten miles to fetch lime. A sudden strength will thenceforward invest your fences ; and from having been so open that no efforts on the part of your neighbours could keep their cattle from straying into your fields, you will find them all at once become wholly impervious.

But, to return, I maintain that these continual blisters, of petty trickery and petty malignity, produce a very vexatious effect. You are quite put about at finding out one of your servants in some petty piece of dishonesty or deception. You are decidedly worried if you happen to be sitting in a cottage where your coachman does not know that you are ; and if you discern from the window that functionary, who never exercises your horses in your presence save at a walk, galloping them furiously over the hard stones ; shaking their legs and endangering their wind. It is annoying to find your haymakers working desperately hard and fast when you appear in the field, not aware that from amid a little clump of wood you had discerned them a minute before reposing quietly

upon the fragrant heaps, and possibly that you had overheard them saying that they need not work very hard, as they were working for a gentleman. You would not have been displeased had you found them honestly resting on the sultry day: but you are annoyed by the small attempt to deceive you. Such pieces of petty trickery put you more out of sorts than you would like to acknowledge: and you are likewise ashamed to discover that you mind so much as you do, when some goodnatured friend comes and informs you how Mr. Snarling has been misrepresenting something you have said or done; and Miss Limejuice has been telling lies to your prejudice. You are a clergyman, perhaps; and you said in your sermon last Sunday that, strong Protestant as you are, you believed that many good people may be found in the Church of Rome. Well, ever since then, Miss Limejuice has not ceased to rush about the parish, exclaiming in every house she entered, 'Is not this awful? Here, on Sunday morning, the rector said that we ought all to become Roman Catholics! One comfort is, the Bishop is to have him up directly. I was always sure that he was a Jesuit in disguise.' Or you are a country gentleman: and at an election-time you told one of your tenants that such a candidate was your friend, and that you would be happy if he could conscientiously vote for him, but that he was to do just what he thought right. Ever since, Mr. Snarling has been spreading a report that you went, drunk, into your tenant's house, that you thrust your fist in his face, that you took him by the collar and shook him, that you told him that, if he did not vote for your friend, you would turn him out of your farm and send his wife and children to the workhouse. For in such playful exaggerations do people in small commu

nitie not unfrequently indulge. Now you are vexed when you hear of such pieces of petty malignity. They don't do you much harm; for most people whose opinion you value, know how much weight to attach to any statement of Miss Limejuice and Mr. Snarling; and if you try to do your duty day by day where God has put you, and to live an honest, Christian life, it will go hard but you will live down such malicious vilification. But these things worry. They act as blisters, in short, without the medicinal value of blisters. And little contemptible worries do a great deal to detract from the enjoyment of life. To meet great misfortunes we gather up our endurance, and pray for Divine support and guidance; but as for small blisters, the *insect cares* (as James Montgomery called them) of daily life, we are very ready to think that they are too little to trouble the Almighty with them, or even to call up our fortitude to face them. This is not a sermon; but let it be said that whosoever would learn how rightly to meet the perpetually-recurring worries of workday existence, should read an admirable little treatise by Mrs. Stowe, the authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, entitled *Earthly Care a Heavenly Discipline*. The price of the work is one penny, but it contains advice which is worth an uncounted number of pence. Nor, as I think, are there to be found many more corroding and vexatious agencies than those which have been already named. To know that your servants, or your humbler neighbours, or your tradespeople, or your tenantry, or your scholars, are practising upon you a system of petty deception; or to be informed (as you are quite sure to be informed) how such and such a mischievous (or perhaps only thoughtless) acquaintance is putting words into your mouth which you never uttered, or abusing your wife and

children, or gloating over your failure to get into parliament, or the lameness of your horses, or the speech you stuck in at the recent public dinner; — all these things are pettily vexatious to many men. No doubt, over-sensitiveness is abundantly foolish. Some folk appear not merely to be thinskinued, but to have been (morally) deprived of any skin at all; and such folk punish themselves severely enough for their folly. They wince when any one comes near them. The Pope may go wrong, but they cannot. It is treasonable, it is inexpressible sin, to hint that, in judgment, in taste, in conduct, it is possible for them to deviate by a hair's-breadth from the right line of perfection. Indeed, I believe that no immorality, no criminality, would excite such wrath in some men, as to tread upon a corner of their self-conceit. Yet it is curious how little sympathy these over-sensitive people have for the sensitiveness of other people. You would say they fancied that the skin of which they have been denuded has been applied to thicken to rhinoceros callousness the moral hide of other men. They speak their mind freely to their acquaintances of their acquaintances' belongings. They will tell an acquaintance (they have no friends, so I must repeat the word) that he made a very absurd speech, that she sung very badly, that the situation of his house (which he cannot leave) is abominably dull, that his wife is foolish and devoid of accomplishments, that her husband is a man of mediocre abilities, that her little boy has red hair and a squint, that the potatoes he rears are abominably bad, that he is getting unwieldily stout, that his riding-horse has no hair on his tail. All these things, and a hundred more, such people say with that mixture of dulness of perception and small malignity of nature which go to make what is

vulgarly called a person who 'speaks his mind.' The right way to meet such folk is by an instant reciprocal action. Just begin to speak your mind to them, and see how they look. Tell them, with calm politeness, that before expressing their opinion so confidently, they should have considered what their opinion was worth. Tell them that civility requires that you should listen to their opinion, but that they may be assured that you will act upon your own. Tell them what you think of their spelling, their punctuation, their features, their house, their carpets, their window-curtains, their general standing as members of the human race. How blue they will look! They are quite taken aback when the same petty malignity and insolence which they have been accustomed for years to carry into their neighbours' territory is suddenly directed against their own. And you will find that not only are they themselves skinlessly sensitive, but that their sensitiveness is not bounded by their own mental and corporeal being; and that it extends to the extreme limits of their horses' legs, to the very top of their chimney-pots, to every member of the profession which was honored by the choice of their great-grandfather.

You have observed, no doubt, that the mention of oversensitive people acted upon the writer's train of thought as a pair of *points* in the rails act upon a railway train. It shunted me off the main line; and in these remarks on people who talk their mind, I have been, so to speak, running along a siding. To go back to the point where I left the line, I observe, that although it is very foolish to mind much about such small matters as being a little cheated day by day, and a good deal misrepresented now and then by amiable acquaintances, still it is the fact that even upon people of a healthful temperament such things

act as moral blisters, as moral pebbles in one's boots. The petty malignity which occasionally annoys you is generally to be found among your acquaintances, and people of the same standing with yourself; while the petty trickery for the most part exists in the case of your inferiors. I think one always feels the better for looking any small evil of life straight in the face. To define a thing, to fix its precise dimensions, almost invariably makes it look a good deal smaller. Indefiniteness much increases apparent size; so let us now examine the size and the operation of these blisters of humanity.

As for petty malignity, my reader, have you not seen a great deal of it? There are not many men who appear to love their neighbours as themselves. No one enjoys a misfortune or disappointment which befalls himself: but there is too much truth in the smart Frenchman's saying, that there is something not entirely disagreeable to us in the misfortunes of even our very best friends. The malignity, indeed, is petty. It is only in small matters. And it is rather in feeling than in action. Even that sour Miss Limejuice, though she would be very glad if your horse fell lame or your carriage upset, would not see you drowning without doing her very best to save you. Ah, poor thing! she is not so bad, after all. This has been to her but a bitter world; and no wonder if she is, on the surface, a little embittered by it. But when you get fairly through the surface of her nature, as real misfortunes and trials do, there is kindliness about that withered heart yet. She would laugh at you if you broke down in your speech on the hustings; but she would throw herself in the path of a pair of furious runaway horses, to save a little child from their trampling feet. I do not believe

that among ordinary people, even in a gossiping little country town, there is much real and serious malice in this world. I cling to that belief; for if many men were truly as mischievous as you would sometimes think when you hear them talk, one might turn misanthrope and hermit at once. There is hardly a person you know who would do you any material injury; not one who would cut down your roses, or splash your entrance-gate with mud: not one who would not gladly do you a kind turn if it lay within his power. Yet there are a good many who would with satisfaction repeat any story which might be a little to your disadvantage; which might tend to prove that you are rather silly, rather conceited, rather ill-informed. You have various friends who would not object to show up any ridiculous mistake you might happen to make; who would never forget the occasion on which it appeared that you had never heard of the *Spectator* or Sir Roger de Coverley, or that you thought that Mary Queen of Scots was the mother of George III. You have various friends who would preserve the remembrance of the day on which the rector rebuked you for talking in church; or on which your partner and yourself fell flat on the floor of the ball-room at the county town of Oatmealshire, in the midst of a gallop. You have various goodnatured friends to whom it would be a positive enjoyment to come and tell you what a very unfavourable opinion Mr. A and Mrs. B and Miss C had been expressing of your talents, character, and general conduct. How true was the remark of Sir Fretful Plagiary, that it is quite unnecessary for any man to take pains to learn anything bad that has been said about him, inasmuch as it is quite sure to be told him by some goodnatured friend or other! You have various acquaintances

who will be very much gratified when a rainy day spoils the pic-nic to which you have invited a large party ; and who will be perfectly enraptured, if you have hired a steamboat for the occasion, and if the day proves so stormy that every soul on board is deadly sick. And indeed it is satisfactory to think that in our uncertain climate, where so many festal days are marred as to their enjoyment by drenching showers, there is eompensation for the sufferings of the people who are ducked, in the enjoyment which that fact affords to very many of their friends. By taking a larger view of things, you discover that there is good in everything. You were Senior Wrangler : you just miss being made a Bishop at forty-two. No doubt that was a great disappointment to yourself ; but think what a joy it was to some scores of fellows whom you beat at College, and who hate you accordingly. Some months ago a proprietor in this county was raised to the peerage. His tenantry were entertained at a public dinner in honour of the event. The dinner was held in a large canvas pavilion. The day came. It was fearfully stormy, and torrents of rain fell. A perfect shower-bath was the portion of many of the guests ; and finally the canvas walls and roof broke loose, smashed the crockery, and whelmed the feast in fearful ruin. During the nine days which followed, the first remark made by every one you met was, ‘What a sad pity about the storm spoiling the dinner at Stuckup Place!’ And the countenance of every one who thus expressed his sorrow was radiant with joy ! And quite natural too. They would have felt real regret had the new peer been drowned or shot : but the petty malignity which dwells in the human bosom made them rejoice at the small but irritating misfortune which had befallen.

Shall I confess it, *mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, I rejoiced in common with all my fellow-creatures ! I was ashamed of the feeling. I wished to ignore it and extinguish it ; but there was no doubt that it was there. And if Lord Newman was a person of enlarged and philosophic mind, he would have rejoiced that a small evil, which merely mortified himself and gave bad colds to his tenantry, afforded sensible pleasure to several thousands of his fellow-men. Yes, my reader : it is well that a certain measure of small malice is ingrained in our fallen nature. For thus some pleasure comes out of almost all pain ; some good from almost all evil. Your little troubles vex you, but they gratify your friends. Your horse comes down and smashes his knees. No doubt, to you and your groom it is unmingled bitterness. But every man within several miles, whose horse's knees have already been smashed, hails the event as a real blessing to himself. You signally fail of getting into Parliament, though you stood for a county in which you fancied that your own influence and that of your connexions was all-powerful. No doubt, you are sadly mortified. No doubt, you do not look like yourself for several weeks. But what chuckles of joy pervade the hearts and faces of five hundred fellows who have no chance of getting into the House themselves, and who dislike you for your huge fortune, your grand house, your countless thoroughbreds, your insufferable dignity, and your general forgetfulness of the place where you grew, which by those around you is perfectly well remembered. And while it is true that even people of a tolerably benevolent nature do not really feel any great regret at any mortification or disappointment which befalls a wealthy and pretentious neighbour, it is also certain that a greater number of folk do actually gloat

over any event which humbles the wealthy and pretentious man. You find them, with a malignant look, putting the case on a benevolent footing. 'This taking-down will do him a great deal of good: he will be much the wiser and better for it.' It is not uncharitable to believe, that in many cases in which such sentiments are expressed, the true feeling of the speaker is rather one of satisfaction, at the pain which the disappointment certainly gives, than of satisfaction at the beneficial discipline which may possibly result from it. The thing *said* amounts to this: 'I am glad that Mr. Rielman has got a taking-down, because the taking-down, though painful at the time, is in fact a blessing.' The thing *felt* amounts to this: 'I am glad that Mr. Rielman has got a taking-down, because I know it will make him very miserable.' Every one who reads this page knows that this is so. Ah, my malicious acquaintances, if you know that the sentiment you entertain is one that would provoke universal execration if it were expressed, does not *that* show that you ought not to entertain it?

I have said that I do not believe there is much real malignity among ordinary men and women. It is only at the petty misfortunes of men's friends that they ever feel this unamiable satisfaction. When great sorrow befalls a friend, all this unworthy feeling goes; and the heart is filled with true sympathy and kindness. A man must be very bad indeed if this is not the case. It strikes me as something fiend-like rather than human, Byron's savage exultation over the melancholy end of the great and amiable Sir Samuel Romilly. Romilly had given him offence by acting as legal adviser to some whom Byron regarded as his enemies. But it was babyish to cherish enmity for such a cause as that; and it was dia-

bolical to rejoice at the sad close of that life of usefulness and honour. It was not good in James Watt, writing in old age an account of one of his many great inventions, to name very bitterly a man who had pirated it; and to add, with a vengeful chuckle, that the poor man was 'afterwards hanged.' No private ground of offence should make you rejoice that your fellow-creature was hanged. You may justifiably rejoice in such a case only when the man hanged was a public offender, and an enemy of the race. Throw up your hat, if you please, when Nana Sahib stretches the hemp at last! *That* is all right. He never did harm to you individually: but you think of Cawnpore; and it is quite fit that there should be a bitter, burning satisfaction felt at the condign punishment of one whose punishment eternal justice demands. What is the use of the gallows, if not for that incarnate demon? I think of the poor sailors who were present at the trial of a bloodthirsty pirate of the Cuban coast. 'I suppose,' said the one doubtingly to the other, 'the devil will get that fellow.' 'I should hope so,' was the unhesitating reply; 'or what would be the use of having any devil!'

But some real mischievous malice there is, even among people who bear a creditable character. I have occasionally heard old ladies (very few) tearing up the character of a friend with looks as deadly as though their weapon had been a stiletto, instead of that less immediately fatal instrument of offence, concerning which a very high authority informs us, that in some cases it is 'set on fire of hell.' Ah, you poor girl, who danced three times (they call it nine) with Mr. A. at the Assembly last night, happily you do not know the venomous way in which certain spiteful tabbies are pitching into you this morning! And

you, my friend, who drove along Belvidere-place (the fashionable quarter of the county town) yesterday, in your new drag with the new harness and the pair of thoroughbreds, and fancied that you were charming every eye and heart, if you could but hear how your equipage and yourself were scarified last evening, as several of your elderly female acquaintances sipped together the cup that cheers ! How they brought up the time that you were flogged at the public school, and the term you were rusticated at Oxford ! Even the occasion was not forgotten on which your grandfather was believed, forty years since, to have rather done Mr. Softly in the matter of a glandered steed. And the peculiar theological tenets of your grandmother were set forth in a fashion that would have astounded that good old lady. And you, who are so happily occupied in building in that beautiful woodland spot that graceful Elizabethan house, little you know how bitterly some folk, dwelling in hideous scedy mansions, sneer at you and your gimcracks, and your Gothic style in which you ‘go back to barbarism.’ You, too, my friend, lately made a Queen’s counsel, or a judge, or a bishop, if the shafts of envy could kill you, you would not live long. It is curious, by the way, how detraction follows a man when he first attains to any eminent place in State or Church ; how keenly his qualifications are canvassed ; how loudly his unfitness for his situation is proclaimed ; and how, when a few months have passed, everybody gets quite reconciled to the appointment, and accepts it as one of the conditions of human affairs. Sometimes, indeed, the right man, by emphasis, is put in the right place ; so unquestionably the right man that even envy is silenced : as when Lord St. Leonards was made Lord Chancellor, or when Mr. Melvill was ap-

pointed to preach before the House of Commons. But even when men who have been plucked at the University were made bishops, or princes who had never seen a gun fired in anger field-m Marshals, or briefless barristers judges, although a general outcry arose at the time, it very speedily died away. When you find a man actually in a place, you do not weigh his claims to be there so keenly as if you were about to appoint him to it. If a resolute premier made Tom Spring a chief-justice, I doubt not that in six weeks the country would be quite accustomed to the fact, and accept it as part of the order of nature. How else is it that the nation is content to have blind and deaf generals placed in high command, and infirm old admirals going to sea who ought to be going to bed?

It is a sad fact that there are men and women who will, without much investigation as to its truth, repeat a story to the prejudice of some man or woman whom they know. They are much more critical in weighing the evidence in support of a tale to a friend's credit and advantage. I do not think they would absolutely invent such a calumnious narrative; but they will repeat, if it has been told them, what, if they do not know it to be false, they also do not know to be true, and strongly suspect to be false.

My friend Mr. C., rector of a parish in Hampshire, has a living of about five hundred a year. Some months ago he bought a horse, for which he paid fifty pounds. Soon after he did so, I met a certain malicious woman who lived in his neighbourhood. 'So,' said she, with a look far from benevolent, 'Mr. C. has gone and paid a hundred pounds for a horse! Monstrous extravagance for a man with his means and with a family.' 'No, Miss Verjuice,' I replied: 'Mr. C. did not pay nearly the sum you mention for his horse: he paid no more for it than a man

of his means could afford.' Miss Verjuice was not in the least discomfited by the failure of her first shaft of petty malignity. She had another in her quiver which she instantly discharged. 'Well,' said she, with a face of deadly ferocity, 'if Mr. C. did not pay a hundred pounds for his horse, *at all events he said he did!*' This was the drop too much. I told Miss Verjuice, with considerable asperity, that my friend was incapable of petty vapouring and petty falsehood; and in my book, from that day forward, there has stood a black cross against the individual's name.

Egypt, it seems, is the country where malevolence in the sense of pure envy of people who are better off, is most prevalent and is most feared. People there believe that the envious eye does harm to those on whom it rests. Thus, they are afraid to possess fine houses, furniture, and horses, lest they should excite envy and bring misfortune. And when they allow their children to go out for a walk, they send them dirty and ill-dressed, for fear the covetous eye should injure them: —

At the bottom of this superstition is an enormous prevalence of envy among the lower Egyptians. You see it in all their fictions. Half of the stories told in the coffee-shops by the professional storytellers, of which the *Arabian Nights* are a specimen, turn on malevolence. Malevolence, not attributed, as it would be in European fiction, to some insult or injury inflicted by the person who is its object, but to mere envy: envy of wealth, or of the other means of enjoyment, honourably acquired and liberally used.*

A similar envy, no doubt, occasionally exists in this country; but people here are too enlightened to fancy that it can do them any harm. Indeed, so far from standing in fear of exciting envy by their display of possessions and advantages, some people feel much grati-

* Archbishop Whately's *Bacon*, p. 97.

fied at the thought of the amount of envy and malignity which they are likely to excite. 'Wont old Hunks turn green with fury,' said a friend to me, 'the first time I drive up to his door with those horses?' They were indeed beautiful animals; but their proprietor appeared to prize them less for the pleasure they afforded himself, than for the mortification they would inflict on certain of his neighbours. 'Wont Mrs. Grundy burst with spite when she sees this drawing-room?' was the remark of my lately-married cousin Henrietta, when she showed me that very pretty apartment for the first time. 'Wont Snooks be ferocious,' said Mr. Dryasdust the book-collector, 'when he hears that I have got this almost unique edition?' Ah, my fellow-creatures, we are indeed a fallen race!

Hazlitt maintains that the petty malignity of mortals finds its most striking field in the matter of will-making. He says:

The last act of our lives seldom belies the former tenor of them for stupidity, caprice, and unmeaning spite. All that we seem to think of is to manage matters so (in settling accounts with those who are so unmannerly as to survive us) as to do as little good and plague and disappoint as many people as possible.*

Every one knows that this brilliant essayist was accustomed to deal in sweeping assertions; and it is to be hoped that such cases as that which he here describes form the exception to the rule. But it must be admitted that most of us have heard of wills at whose reading we might almost imagine their malicious maker fancied he might be invisibly present to chuckle over the disappointment and mortification which he was dealing even from his grave. Cases are also recorded in which rich

* *Table-Talk*, vol. i. p. 171. 'Essay on Will-making.'

old bachelors have played upon the hopes of half a dozen poor relations, by dropping hints to each separately that *he* was to be the fortunate heir of all their wealth; and then have left their fortune to an hospital, or have departed from this world intestate, leaving an inheritance mainly of quarrels, heart-burnings, and Chancery suits. How often the cringing, tale-bearing toady, who has borne the ill-humours of a rich sour old maid for thirty years, in the hope of a legacy, is cut off with nineteen guineas for a mourning ring! You would say perhaps, 'Serve her right.' I differ from you. If any one likes to be toadied, he ought in honesty to pay for it. He knows quite well he would never have got it save for the hope of payment; and you have no more right to swindle some poor creature out of years of cringing and flattering than out of pounds of money. A very odd case of petty malice in will-making was that of a man who, not having a penny in this world, left a will in which he bequeathed to his friends and acquaintance large estates in various parts of England, money in the funds, rings, jewels, and plate. His inducement was the prospect of the delight of his friends at first learning about the rich possessions which were to be theirs, and then the bitter disappointment at finding how they had been hoaxed. Such deceptions and hoaxes are very cruel. Who does not feel for poor Moore and his wife, receiving a lawyer's letter just at a season of special embarrassment, to say that some deceased admirer of the poet had left him five hundred pounds, and, after being buoyed up with hope for a few days, finding that some malicious rascal had been playing upon them! No; poor people know that want of money is too serious a matter to be joked about.

Let me conclude what I have to say about petty malignity by observing that I am very far from maintaining that all unfavourable remark about people you know proceeds from this unamiable motive. Some folk appear to fancy that if you speak of any man in any terms but those of superlative praise, this must be because you bear him some ill-will: they cannot understand that you may merely wish to speak truth and do justice. Every person who writes a stupid book and finds it unfavourably noticed in any review, instantly concludes that the reviewer must be actuated by some petty spite. The author entirely overlooks the alternative that his book may be said to be bad because it *is* bad, and because it is the reviewer's duty to say so if he thinks so. I remember to have heard the friend of a lady who had published a bitterly bad and unbecoming work speaking of the notice of it which had appeared in a periodical of the very highest class. The notice was of course unfavourable. 'Oh,' said the writer's friend, 'I know why the review was so disgraceful: the man who wrote it was lately jilted, and he hates all women in consequence!' It happened that I had very good reason to know who wrote the depreciatory article, and I could declare that the motive assigned to the reviewer had not the least existence in fact.

Unfavourable remark has frequently no earthly connexion with malignity great or petty. It is quite fit that, as in people's presence politeness requires that you should not say what you think of them, you should have an opportunity of doing so in their absence; and every one feels when the limits of fair criticism are passed. What *could* you do if, after listening with every appearance of interest to some old lady's wearisome vapouring, you felt bound to pretend, after you had made your escape,

that you thought her conversation was exceedingly interesting? What a relief it is to tell what you have suffered to some sympathetic friend! I have heard injudicious people say, as something much to a man's credit, that he never speaks of any mortal except in his praise. I do not think the fact is to the man's advantage. It appears to prove either that the man is so silly that he thinks everything he hears and sees to be good, or that he is so crafty and reserved that he will not commit himself by saying what he thinks. Outspoken good-nature will sometimes get into scrapes from which self-contained craft will keep free; but the man who, to use Miss Edgeworth's phrase, 'thinks it best in general not to speak of things,' will be liked by nobody.

By petty trickery I mean that small deception which annoys and worries you, without doing you material harm. Thus it passes petty trickery when a bank publishes a swindling report, on the strength of whose false representations of prosperity you invest your hard-won savings in its stock and lose them all. It passes petty trickery when your clerk absconds with some hundreds of pounds. It indicates petty trickery when you find your servants writing their letters on your crested note-paper, and enclosing them in your crested envelopes. It indicates that at some time or other a successful raid has been made upon your paper-drawer. It indicates petty trickery when you find your horses' ribs beginning to be conspicuous, though they are only half worked and are allowed three feeds of corn a day. Observe your coachman then, my friend. Some of your corn is going where it should not. It indicates petty trickery when your horses' coats are full of dust, though whenever you happen to be present they are groomed with incredible vigour: they are not so in your absence. It indicates

petty trickery when, suddenly turning a corner, you find your coachman galloping the horses along the turnpike-road at the rate of twenty-three miles an hour. It indicates petty trickery when you find your neighbours' eows among your clover. It indicates petty trickery when you find amid a cottager's stock of firewood several palisades taken from your park-fence. It indicates petty trickery when you discern in the morning the traces of very large hobnailed shoes crossing your wife's flower-garden towards the tree where the magnum bonums are nearly ripe. But why extend the catalogue? Every man can add to it a hundred instances. Says Bacon, 'The small wares and petty points of cunning are infinite, and it were a good deed to make a list of them.' Who could make such a list? What numbers of people are practising petty trickery at every hour of the day! Yet, forasmuch as these tricks are small and pretty frequently seen through, they form only a blister: they are irritating but not dangerous: and it is very irritating to know that you have been cheated, to however small an extent. How inestimable is a thoroughly honest servant! Apart from anything like principle, if servants did but know it, it is well worth their while to be strictly truthful and reliable: they are then valued so much. It is highly expedient, besides being right. And not only is it extremely vexatious to find out any domestic in dishonesty of any kind; not only does it act as a blister at the moment, but it fosters in one's self a suspicious habit of mind which has in it something degrading. It is painful to be obliged to feel that you must keep a strict watch upon your stable or your granary. You have somewhat of the feeling of a spy; yet you cannot, if you have ordinary powers of observation, shut your eyes to what passes round you.

There is, indeed, some petty trickery which is highly venial, not to say pleasing. When a little child, on being offered a third plate of plum-pudding, says, with a wistful and half-ashamed look, 'No, thank you,' well you know that the statement is not entirely candid, and that the poor little thing would be sadly disappointed if you took him at his word. Think of your own childish days; think what plum-pudding was then, and instantly send the little man a third plate, larger than the previous two. So if your gardener gets wet to the skin in mowing a little bit of turf, in a drenching summer-shower, which turns it, parched for the last fortnight, to emerald green, tell him he must be very wet, and give him a glass of whisky; never mind, though he, in his politeness, declares that he does not want the whisky, and is perfectly dry and comfortable. You will find him very readily dispose of the proffered refreshment. So if you go into a poor, but spotlessly-clean little cottage, where a lonely widow of eighty sits by her spinning-wheel. Her husband and her children are dead, and there she is, all alone, waiting till she goes to rejoin them. A poor, dog's-eared, ill-printed Bible lies on the rickety deal-table near. You take a large parcel which you have brought, wrapped in brown paper; and as you talk with the good old Christian, you gradually untie it. A well-sized volume appears; it is the Volume which is worth all the rest that ever were written; and you tell your aged friend that you have brought her a Bible, with great, clear type, which will be easily read by her failing eyes, and you ask her to accept it. You see the flush of joy and gratitude on her face, and you do not mind though she says something which is not strictly true—that it was too kind of you, that she did not need it, that she could manage with the old one yet. Nor would you

severely blame the brave fellow who jumped off a bridge forty feet high, and pulled out your brother when he was just sinking in a flooded river, if, when you thanked him with a full heart for the risk he had run, he replied, in a careless, good-humoured way, that he had really done nothing worth the speaking of. The brave man is pained by your thanks: but he thought of his wife and children when he leaped from the parapet, and he knew well that he was hazarding his life. And he is perfectly aware that the statement which he makes is not consistent with fact — but surely you would never call him a trickster !

Mr. J. S. Mill, unquestionably a very courageous as well as a very able writer, has declared in a recent publication, that, in Great Britain, the higher classes, for the most part, speak the truth, while the lower classes, almost without exception, have frequent recourse to falsehood. I think Mr. Mill must have been unfortunate in his experience of the poor. I have seen much of them and I have found among them much honesty and truthfulness, along with great kindness of heart. They have little to give away in the form of money, but will cheerfully give their time and strength in the service of a sick neighbour. I have known a shepherd who had come in from the hills in the twilight of a cold December afternoon, weary and worn out, find that the little child of a poor widow in the next cottage had suddenly been taken ill, and without sitting down, take his stick, and walk away through the dark to the town nine miles off, to fetch the doctor. And when I told the fine fellow how much I respected his manly kindness, I found he was quite unaware that he had done anything remarkable; ‘it was just what any neighbour wad do for anither!’ And I could

mention scores of similar cases. And as for truthfulness, I have known men and women among the peasantry, both of England and Scotland, whom I would have trusted with untold gold — or even with what the Highland laird thought a more searching test of rectitude — with unmeasured whisky. Still, I must sorrowfully admit that I have found in many people a strong tendency, when they had done anything wrong, to justify themselves by falsehood. It is not impossible that over-severe masters and mistresses, by undue scoldings administered for faults of no great moment, foster this unhappy tendency. It was not, however, of one class more than another, that the quaint old minister of a parish in Lanarkshire was speaking, when one Sunday morning he read as his text the verse in the Psalms, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars,' and began his sermon by thoughtfully saying: —

'Aye, David, ye said it in your haste, did you? If ye had lived in this parish, ye might have said it at your leisure!'

There is hardly a sadder manifestation of the spirit of petty trickery than that which has been pressed on the attention of the public by recent accounts of the adulteration of food. It is, indeed, sad enough,

When chalk, and alum, and plaster, are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life;

and when the luxuries of the rich are in many cases quite as much tampered with; while, when medical appliances become needful to correct the evil effects of red lead, plaster of Paris, cantharides, and oil of vitriol, the physician is quite uncertain as to the practical power

of the medicine he prescribes, inasmuch as drugs are as much adulterated as food. Still, there seems reason to hope that, more frequently than the *Lancet* Commission would lead one to think, you really get in the shops the thing you ask and pay for. I firmly believe that, in this remote district of the world, such petty dishonesty is unknown: and I cannot refrain from saying that, notwithstanding all I have read of late years in tracts, sermons, poems, and leading articles, of the frequency of fraud in the dealings of tradesmen in towns, I never in my own experience have seen the least trace of it.

Most human beings, however, will tell you that day by day they witness a good deal of indirectness, insincerity, and want of straightforwardness — in fact, of petty trickery. There are many people who appear incapable of doing anything without going round about the bush, as Caledonians say. There are many people who always try to disguise the real motive for what they do. They will tell you of anything but the consideration that actually weighs with them, though that is in most cases perfectly well known to the person they are talking to. Some men will tell you that they travel second-class by railway because it is warmer, cooler, airier, pleasanter than the first-class. They suppress all mention of the consideration that obviously weighs with them, viz., that it is cheaper. Mr. Squeers gave the boys at Dotheboys Hall treacle and sulphur one morning in the week. The reason he assigned was that it was good for their health: but his more outspoken wife stated the true reason, which was that, by sickening the children, it made breakfast unnecessary upon that day. Some Dissenters pretend that they want to abolish Church-rates, with a view to the good of the Church: of course everybody knows that

their real wish is to do the Church harm. Very soft indeed would the members of the Church be, if they believed that its avowed enemies are extremely anxious for its welfare. But the forms of petty trickery are endless. Bacon mentions in one of his *Essays* that he knew a statesman who, when he came to Queen Elizabeth with bills to sign, always engaged her in conversation about something else, to distract her attention from the papers she was signing. And when some impudent acquaintance asks you, reader, to put your name to another kind of bill, for his advantage, does he not always think to delude you into doing so by saying that your signing is a mere form, intended only for the fuller satisfaction of the bank that is to lend him the money? He does not tell you that he is just asking you to give him the sum named on that stamped paper. Don't believe a word he says, and show him the door. Signing a promise to pay money is never a form; if it be a form, why does he ask you to do it? Bacon mentions another man, who 'when he came to have speech, would pass over that he intended most, and go forth, and come back again, and speak of it as a thing he had almost forgot.' I have known such men too. We have all known men who would come and talk about many indifferent things, and then at the end bring in as if accidentally the thing they came for. Always pull such men sharply up. Let them understand that you see through them. When they sit down, and begin to talk of the weather, the affairs of the district, the new railway, and so forth, say at once, 'Now, Mr. Pawky, I know you did not come to talk to me about these things. What is it you want to speak of? I am busy, and have no time to waste.' It is wonderful how this will beat down Mr. Pawky's guard. He is pre-

pared for sly finesse, but he is quite taken aback by downright honesty. If you try to do him, he will easily do you : but perfect candour foils the crafty man, as the sturdy Highlander's broadsword at once cut down the French master of fence, vapouring away with his rapier. *You* cannot beat a rogue with his own weapons. Try him with truth : like David, he 'has not proved' that armour ; he is quite unaccustomed to it, and he goes down.

Men in towns know that time is valuable to them ; and by long experience they are assured that there is no use in trying to overreach a neighbour in a bargain, because he is so sharp that they will not succeed. But in agricultural districts some persons may be found who appear to regard it as a fond delusion that 'honesty is the best policy ;' and who never deal with a stranger without feeling their way, and trying how far it may be possible to cheat him. I am glad to infer, from the universal contempt in which such persons are held, that they form base, though by no means infrequent, exceptions to the general rule. The course which such individuals follow in buying and selling is quite marked and invariable. If they wish to buy a cow or rent a field, they begin by declaring with frequency and vehemence that they don't want the thing, — that in fact they would rather not have it, — that it would be inconvenient for them to become possessors of it. They then go on to say that still, if they can get it at a fair price, they may be induced to think of it. They next declare that the cow is the very worst that ever was seen, and that very few men would have such a creature in their possession. The seller of the cow, if he knows his customer, meanwhile listens with entire indifference to Mr. Pawky's asseverations, and after a while proceeds to name his price.

Fifteen pounds for the cow. 'Oh,' says Mr. Pawky, getting up hastily and putting on his hat, 'I see you don't want to sell it. I was just going to have offered you five pounds. I see I need not spend longer time here.' Mr. Pawky, however, does not leave the room: sometimes, indeed, if dealing with a green hand, he may actually depart for half an hour; but then he returns and resumes the negotiation. A friend of his has told him that possibly the cow was better than it looked. It looked very bad indeed; but it might be a fair cow after all. So the proceedings go on: and after an hour's haggling, and several scores of falsehoods told by Mr. Pawky, he becomes the purchaser of the animal for the sum originally named. Even now he is not exhausted. He assures the former owner of the cow that it is the custom of the district always to give back half-a-crown in the pound, and refuses to hand over more than £13 2s. 6d. The cow is by this time on its way to Mr. Pawky's farm. If dealing with a soft man, this final trick possibly succeeds. If with an experienced person, it wholly fails. And Mr. Pawky, after wasting two hours, telling sixty-five lies, and stamping himself as a cheat in the estimation of the person with whom he was dealing, ends by taking nothing by all his petty trickery. Oh, poor Pawky, why not be honest and straightforward at once? You would get just as much money, in five cases out of six; and you would save your time and breath, and miss running up that fearful score in the book of the recording angel!

After any transaction with Mr. Pawky, how delightful it is to meet with a downright honest man! I know several men — farmers, labourers, country gentlemen — of that noble class, whose 'word is as good as their bond!' I know men whom you could not even imagine as taking

a petty advantage of any mortal. They are probably far from being pieces of perfection. They are crotchety in temper; they are rough in address; their clothes were never made by Stultz; possibly they do not shave every morning. But as I look at the open, manly face, and feel the strong gripe of the vigorous hand, and rejoice to think that the world goes well with them, and that they find it pay to speak the truth, — I feel for the minute as if the somewhat overstrained sentiment had truth in it, that

An honest man's the noblest work of God!

I am firmly convinced that no man, in the long run, gains by petty trickery. Honesty is the best policy. You remember how the roguish Ephraim Jenkinson, in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, mentioned that he contrived to cheat honest Farmer Flamborough about once a year; but still the honest farmer grew rich, and the rogue grew poor, and so Jenkinson began to bethink him that he was in the wrong track after all. A man who with many oaths declares a brokenwinded nag is sound as a bell, and thus gets fifty pounds for an animal he bought for ten, and then declares with many more oaths that he never warranted the horse, may indeed gain forty pounds in money by that transaction, but he loses much more than he gains. The man whom he cheated, and the friends of the man whom he cheated, will never trust him again; and he soon acquires such a character that every one who is compelled to have any dealings with him stands on his guard, and does not believe a syllable he says. I do not mention here the solemn consideration of how the gain and loss may be adjusted in the view of another world; nor do more than allude to a certain solemn question as to the profit which would follow the gain of

much more than forty pounds, by means which would damage something possessed by every man. All trickery is folly. Every rogue is a fool. The publisher who advertises a book he has brought out, and appends a flattering criticism of it as from the *Times* or *Fraser's Magazine* which never appeared in either periodical, does not gain on the whole by such petty deception; neither does the publisher who appends highly recommendatory notices, marked with inverted commas as quotations, though with the name of no periodical attached, the fact being that he composed these notices himself. You will say that Mr. Barnum is an instance of a man who made a large fortune by the greater and lesser arts of trickery; but would you, my honest and honourable friend, have taken that fortune on the same terms? I hope not. And no blessing seems to have rested on Barnum's gains. Where are they now? The trickster has been tricked—the doer done. There is a hollowness about all prosperity which is the result of unfair and underhand means. Even if a man who has grown rich through trickery seems to be going on quite comfortably, depend upon it he cannot feel happy. The sword of Damocles is hanging over his head. Let no man be called happy before he dies.

I believe, indeed, that in some cases the conscience grows quite callous, and the notorious cheat fancies himself a highly moral and religious man; and although it is always extremely irritating to be cheated, it is more irritating than usual to think that the man who has cheated you is not even made uneasy by the checks of his own conscience. I would gladly think that in most cases,

Doubtless the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated as to cheat.

I would gladly think that the man who has done another feels it as blistering to remember the fact as the man who has been done does. It would gratify me much if I were able to conclude that every man who is a knave knows that he is one. I doubt it. Probably he merely thinks himself a sharp, clever fellow. Only this morning I was cheated out of four and sixpence by a man of very decent appearance. He obtained that sum by making three statements, which I found on inquiring, after he had gone, were false. The gain, you see, was small. He obtained just eighteenpence a lie. Yet he went off, looking extremely honest. And no doubt he will be at his parish church next Sunday, shaking his head sympathetically at the more solemn parts of the sermon. And probably, when he reflects upon the transaction, he merely thinks that he was sharp and I was soft. The analogy between these small tricks and a blister holds in several respects. Each is irritating, and the irritation caused by each gradually departs. You are very indignant at first learning that you have been taken in; you are rather sore, even the day after, — but the day after *that* you are less sore at having been done than sorry for the rogue who was fool enough to do you.

I am writing only of that petty trickery which acts as a blister of humanity; as I need say nothing of those numerous forms of petty trickery which do not irritate, but merely amuse. Such are those silly arts by which some people try to represent themselves to their fellow-creatures as richer, wiser, better-informed, more highly connected, more influential and more successful than the fact. I felt no irritation at the schoolboy who sat opposite me the other day in a railway carriage, and pretended that he was reading a Greek play. I allowed him to

fancy his trick had succeeded, and conversed with him of the characteristics of Æschylus. He did not know much about them. A friend of mine, a clergyman, went to the house of a weaver in his parish. As he was about to knock at the door, he heard a solemn voice within; and he listened in silence as the weaver asked God's blessing upon his food. Then he lifted the latch and entered and thereupon the weaver, resolved that the clergyman should know he said grace before meat, *began and repeated his grace over again.* My friend was not angry; but he was very, very sorry. And never, till the man had been years in his grave, did he mention the fact. As for the fashion in which some people fire off, in conversation with a new acquaintance, every titled name they know, it is to be recorded that the trick is invariably as unsuccessful as it is contemptible. And is not a state dinner, given by poor people, in resolute imitation of people with five times their income, with its sham champagne, its disguised greengrocers, and its general turning the house topsy-turvy, — is not such a dinner one great trick, and a very transparent one?

The writer is extremely tired. Is it not curious that to write for four or five hours a day for four or five successive days, wearies a man to a degree that ten or twelve daily hours of ploughing does not weary the man whose work is physical? Mental work is much the greater stretch: and it is strain, not time, that kills. A horse that walks at two miles and a half an hour, ploughing, will work twelve hours out of the twenty-four. A horse that runs in the mail at twelve miles an hour, works an hour and a half and rests twenty-two and a half; and with all that rest soon breaks down. The bearing of all this is, that it is time to stop; and so, my long black goosequill, lie down!



CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING WORK AND PLAY.

NOBODY likes to work. I should never work at all if I could help it. I mean, when I say that nobody likes work, that nobody does so whose tastes and likings are in a natural and unsophisticated condition. Some men, by long training and by the force of various circumstances, do, I am aware, come to have an actual craving, a morbid appetite, for work; but it is a morbid appetite, just as truly as that which impels a lady to eat chalk, or a child to prefer pickles to sugar-plums. Or if my reader quarrels with the word *morbid*, and insists that a liking for brisk, hard work is a healthy taste and not a diseased one, I will give up that phrase, and substitute for it the less strong one that a liking for work is an *acquired taste*, like that which leads you and me, my friend, to like bitter beer. Such a man, for instance, as Lord Campbell, has brought himself to that state that I have no doubt he actually enjoys the thought of the enormous quantity of work which he goes through; but when he does so he does a thing as completely out of nature as is done by the Indian fakir, who feels a gloomy satisfaction as he reflects on the success with which he has laboured to weed out all

but bitterness from life. I know quite well that we can bring ourselves to such a state of mind that we shall feel a sad sort of pleasure in thinking how much we are taking out of ourselves, and how much we are denying ourselves. What college man who ever worked himself to death but knows well the curious condition of mind? He begins to toil, induced by the love of knowledge, or by the desire of distinction; but after he has toiled on for some weeks or months, there gradually steals in such a feeling as that which I have been describing. I have felt it myself, and so know all about it. I do not believe that any student ever worked harder than I did. And I remember well the gloomy kind of satisfaction I used to feel, as all day, and much of the night, I bent over my books, in thinking how much I was foregoing. The sky never seemed so blue and so inviting as when I looked at it for a moment now and then, and so back to the weary page. And never did the green woodland walks picture themselves to my mind so freshly and delightfully as when I thought of them as of something which I was resolutely denying myself. I remember even now, when I went to bed at half-past four in the morning, having risen at half-past six the previous morning, and having done nearly as much for months, how I was positively pleased to see in the glass the ghastly cheeks, and the deep-black circles round the eyes. There is, I repeat, a certain pleasure in thinking one is working desperately hard, and taking a great deal out of oneself; but it is a pleasure which is unnatural, which is factitious, which is morbid. It is not the healthy, unsophisticated human animal. We know, of course, that Lord Chief-Justice Ellenborough said, when he was about seventy that the greatest pleasure that remained to him in life

was to hear a young barrister, named Follett, argue a point of law ; but it was a highly artificial state of mind, the result of a very long training, which enabled the eminent judge to enjoy the gratification which he described ; and to ordinary men a legal argument, however ably conducted, would be sickeningly tiresome. If you want to know the natural feeling of humanity towards work, see what children think of it. Is not the task always a disagreeable necessity, even to the very best boy ? How I used to hate mine ! Of course, my friendly reader, if you knew who I am, I should talk of myself less freely ; but as you do not know, and could not possibly guess, I may ostensibly do what every man tacitly does, make myself the standard of average human nature, the first meridian from which all distances and deflections are to be measured. Well, my feeling towards my school tasks was nothing short of hatred. And yet I was not a dunce. No, I was a clever boy. I was at the head of all my classes. Not more than once or twice have I competed at school or college for a prize which I did not get. And I hated work all the while. Therefore I believe that all unsophisticated mortals hate it. I have seen silly parents trying to get their children to say that they liked school-time better than holiday-time ; that they liked work better than play. I have seen, with joy, manly little fellows repudiating the odious and unnatural sentiment ; and declaring manfully that they preferred cricket to Ovid. And if any boy ever tells you that he would rather learn his lessons than go out to the play-ground, beware of that boy. Either his health is drooping, and his mind becoming prematurely and unnaturally developed ; or he is a little humbug. He is an impostor. He is seeking to obtain credit under false pretences. Depend upon it

unless it really be that he is a poor little spiritless man, deficient in nerve and muscle, and unhealthily precocious in intellect, he has in him the elements of a sneak ; and he wants nothing but time to ripen him into a pickpocket, a swindler, a horse-dealer, or a British Bank director.

Every one, then, naturally hates work, and loves its opposite, play. And let it be remarked that not idleness, but play, is the opposite of work. But some people are so happy, as to be able to idealize their work into play ; or they have so great a liking for their work that they do not feel their work as effort, and thus the element is eliminated which makes work a pain. How I envy those human beings who have such enjoyment in their work, that it ceases to be work at all ! There is my friend Mr. Tinto the painter ; he is never so happy as when he is busy at his canvas, drawing forth from it forms of beauty ; he is up at his work almost as soon as he has daylight for it ; he paints all day, and he is sorry when the twilight compels him to stop. He delights in his work, and so his work becomes play. I suppose the kind of work which, in the case of ordinary men, never ceases to be work, never loses the conscious feeling of strain and effort, is that of composition. A great poet, possibly, may find much pleasure in writing, and there have been exceptional men who said they never were so happy as when they had the pen in their hand : Buffon, I think, tells us that once he wrote for fourteen hours at a stretch, and all that time was in a state of positive enjoyment ; and Lord Macaulay, in the preface to his recently published *Speeches*, assures us that the writing of his *History* is the occupation and the happiness of his life. Well, I am glad to hear it. Ordinary mortals cannot sympathize with the feeling

To *them* composition is simply hard work, and hard work is pain. Of course, even commonplace men have occasionally had their moments of inspiration, when thoughts present themselves vividly, and clothe themselves in felicitous expressions, without much or any conscious effort. But these seasons are short and far between: and although while they last it becomes comparatively pleasant to write, it never becomes so pleasant as it would be to lay down the pen, to lean back in the easy-chair, to take up the *Times* or *Fraser*, and enjoy the luxury of being carried easily along that track of thought which costs its writer so much labour to pioneer through the trackless jungle of the world of mind. Ah, how easy it is to read what it was so difficult to write! There is all the difference between running down from London to Manchester by the railway after it has been made, and of making the railway from London to Manchester. You, my intelligent reader, who begin to read a chapter of Mr. Froude's eloquent *History*, and get on with it so fluently, are like the snug old gentleman, travelling-capped, railway-rugged, great-coated, and plaided, who leans back in the corner of the softly-cushioned carriage as it flits over Chat-moss; while the writer of the chapter is like George Stephenson, toiling month after month to make the track along which you speed, in the face of difficulties and discouragements which you never think of. And so I say it may sometimes be somewhat easy and pleasant to write, but never so easy and pleasant as it is not to write. The odd thing, too, about the work of the pen is this: that it is often done best by the men who like it least and shrink from it most, and that it is often the most laborious writing along which the reader's mind glides most easily and pleasurably. It is not so in

other matters. As the general rule, no man does well the work which he dislikes. No man will be a good preacher who dislikes preaching. No man will be a good anatomist who hates dissecting. Sir Charles Napier, it must be confessed, was a great soldier, though he hated fighting; and as for writing, some men have been the best writers who hated writing, and who would never have penned a line but under the pressure of necessity. There is John Foster; what a great writer he was: and yet his biography tells us, in his own words, too, scores of times, how he shrunk away from the intense mental effort of composition; how he abhorred it and dreaded it, though he did it so admirably well. There is Coleridge: how that great mind ran to waste, because Coleridge shrank from the painful labour of formal composition: and so *Christabel* must have remained unfinished, save for the eloquent labours of that greatest, wisest, most original, and least commonplace of men, Dr. Martin Farquhar Tupper: and so, instead of volumes of hoarded wisdom and wit, we have but the fading remembrances of hours of marvellous talk. I do not by any means intend to assert that there are not worse things than work, even than very hard work; but I say that work, as work, is a bad thing. It may once have been otherwise, but the curse is in it now. We do it because we must: it is our duty: we live by it; it is the Creator's intention that we should; it makes us enjoy leisure and recreation and rest; it stands between us and the pure misery of idleness; it is dignified and honourable; it is the soil and the atmosphere in which grow cheerfulness, hopefulness, health of body and mind. But still, if we could get all these good ends without it, we should be glad. We do not care for exertion for its

own sake. Even Mr. Kingsley does not love the north-east wind for itself, but because of the good things that come with it and from it. Work is not an end in itself. 'The end of work,' said Aristotle, 'is to enjoy leisure;' or, as *The Minstrel* hath it, 'the end and the reward of toil is rest.' I do not wish to draw from too sacred a source the confirmation of these summer-day fancies; but I think, as I write, of the descriptions which we find in a certain Volume of the happiness of another world. Has not many an over-wrought and wearied-out worker found comfort in an assurance of which I shall here speak no further, that 'there remaineth a rest to the people of God?'

And so, my reader, if it be true that nobody, anywhere, would (in his sober senses) work if he could help it, how especially true is that great principle on this beautiful July day! It is truly a day on which to do nothing. I am here, far in the country, and when I this moment went to the window, and looked out upon a rich summer landscape, everything seemed asleep. The sky is sapphire-blue, without a cloud; the sun is pouring down a flood of splendour upon all things; there is not a breath stirring, hardly the twitter of a bird. All the air is filled with the fragrance of the young clover. The landscape is richly wooded; I never saw the trees more thickly covered with leaves, and now they are perfectly still. I am writing north of the Tweed, and the horizon is of blue hills, which some southrons would call mountains. The wheat-fields are beginning to have a little of the harvest-tinge, and they contrast beautifully with the deep green of the hedge-rows. The roses are almost over, but I can see plenty of honeysuckle in the hedges still, and a perfect blaze of it has covered one projecting branch of a

young oak. I am looking at a little well-shaven green (I shall not call it a lawn, because it is not one); it has not been mown for nearly a fortnight, and it is perfectly white with daisies. Beyond, at a very short distance, through the branches of many oaks, I can see a gable of the church, and a few large gravestones shining white among the green grass and leaves. I do not find all these things any great temptation now, for I have got interested in my work, and I like to write of them. But I found it uncommonly hard to sit down this morning to my work. Indeed, I found it impossible, and thus it is that at five o'clock, P. M., I have got no further than the present line. I had quite resolved that this morning I would sit doggedly down to my essay, in which I have really (though the reader may find it hard to believe it) got something to say; but when I walked out after breakfast, I felt that all nature was saying that this was not a day for work. Come forth and look at me, seemed the message breathed from her beautiful face. And then I thought of Wordsworth's ballad, which sets out so pleasing an excuse for idleness:—

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife,
Come, hear the woodland linnet!
How sweet his music! on my life
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless,--
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood,
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can !

Just at my gate, the man who keeps in order the roads of the parish was hard at work. . How pleasant, I thought, to work amid the pure air and the sweet-smelling clover ! And how pleasant, too, to have work to do of such a nature that when you go to it every morning you can make quite sure that, barring accident, you will accomplish a certain amount before the sun shall set ; while as for the man whose work is that of the brain and the pen, he never can be certain in the morning how much his day's labour may amount to. He may sit down at his desk, spread out his paper, have his ink in the right place, and his favourite pen, and yet he may find that he cannot *get on*, that thoughts will not come, that his mind is utterly sterile, that he cannot see his way through his subject, or that if he can produce anything at all it is poor miserable stuff, whose poorness no one knows better than himself. And so, after hours of effort and discouragement, he may have to lay his work aside, having accomplished nothing, having made no progress at all — wearied, stupified, disheartened, thinking himself a mere blockhead. Thus musing, I approached the roadman. I inquired how his wife and children were. I asked how he liked the new cottage he had lately moved into. Well, he said, but it was far from his work : he had walked eight miles and a half that morning to his work ; he had to walk the same distance home again in the evening after labouring all day ; and for this his wages were thirteen shillings a-week, with a deduction for such days as he might be unable to work. He did not mention all this

by way of complaint; he was comfortably off, he said he should be thankful he was so much better off than many. He had got a little pony lately very cheap, which would carry himself and his tools to and from his employment, and that would be very nice. In all likelihood, my friendly reader, the roadman would not have been so communicative to you; but as for me, it is my duty and my happiness to be the sympathizing friend of every man, woman, and child in this parish, and it pleases me much to believe that there is no one throughout its little population who does not think of me and speak to me as a friend. I talked a little longer to the roadman about parish affairs. We mutually agreed in remarking the incongruous colours of a pair of ponies which passed in a little phaeton, of which one was cream-coloured and the other dapple-grey. The phaeton came from a friend's house a little way off, and I wondered if it were going to the railway to bring some one who (I knew) was expected; for in such simple matters do we simple country folk find something to maintain the interest of life. I need not go on to describe what other things I did; how I looked with pleasure at a field of oats and another of potatoes in which I am concerned, and held several short conversations with passers-by; but the result of the whole was a conviction that, after all, it was best to set to work at once, though well remembering how much by indoor work in the country on such a day as this one is missing. And the thought of the roadman's seventeen miles of walking, in addition to his day's work, was something of a reproof and a stimulus. And thus, determined at least to make a beginning, did I write this much *Concerning Work and Play*.

I find a great want in all that is written on the subject of recreation. People tell me that I need recreation, that I cannot do without it, that mind and body alike demand it. I know all that, but they do not tell me how to recreate myself. They fight shy of all practical details. Now it is just these I want. All working men must have play; but what sort of play can we have? I envy schoolboys their facility of being amused, and of finding recreation which entirely changes the current of their thoughts. A boy flying his kite or whipping his top is pursued by no remembrance of the knotty line of Virgil which puzzled him a little while ago in school; but when the grown-up man takes his sober afternoon walk — perhaps the only relaxation which he has during the day — he is thinking still of the book which he is writing and of the cares which he has left at home. Then, and all the worse for myself, I can feel no interest in flying a kite, or rigging and sailing a little ship, or making a mill-wheel and setting it going, or in marbles, or ball, or running races, or playing at leap-frog. And even if they did feel interest in athletic sports, the lungs and sinews of most educated men of middle age would forbid their joining in them. I need not therefore suggest the doubt which would probably be cast upon a man's sanity were he found eagerly knuckling down (how stiff it would soon make him), or wildly chasing the flying football, or making a rush at a friend and taking a flying leap over his head. Now what recreation, I want to know, is open to the middle-aged man of literary tastes? Shooting, coursing, fishing, says one; but he does not care for shooting, or coursing, or fishing. Gardening, says another; but he does not care for gardening. Watching ferns, caterpillars, frogs, and other 'common objects of the country;'

well, but he lives in town, and if he did not, he does not feel the least interest in ferns and caterpillars. Music is suggested; well, he has no great ear, and he may dwell where he can have little or none of it. Society! pray what is society? No doubt the conversation of intelligent men and women is a most grateful and stimulating recreation; but is there any recreation in dreary dinner-parties, where one listens to the twaddle of silly old gentlemen and emptier young ones, or in the hot-house atmosphere and crush of most evening parties? These are not play; they are very hard work, and a treadmill work producing no beneficial results, but rather provocative of all manner of ill-temper. Then, no doubt, there is most agreeable recreation for some people in the excitement of a polka or galop and its attendant light and cheerful talk, not to say flirtation; but then our representative man has got beyond these things: these are for young people — he is married now and sobered down; he probably was never the man to make himself eminently agreeable in such a scene, and he is less so now than ever. Besides, if play be something from which you are to return with renewed strength and interest to work, I doubt whether the ball-room is the place where it is to be found. Late hours, a feverish atmosphere, and excessive exercise, tend to morning slumbers, headaches, crossness, and laziness. To find dancing which answers the end of recreation, we must go to less fashionable places. I like the pictures which Goldsmith gives us of the sunny summer evenings of France, where the whole population of the village danced to his flute in the shade; and even the soured Child Harold melted somewhat into sympathy with the Spanish peasants as they twirled their castanets in the twilight. Southey's picture

is a pretty one, but its description sounds somewhat unreal :

But peace was on the Cottage, and the fold
From Court intrigue, from bickering faction far:
Beneath the chestnut-tree love's tale was told,
And to the tinkling of the light guitar,
Sweet stooped the western sun, sweet rose the evening star!

Nor let it be fancied that such a scene cannot be represented except in countries to which distance and strangeness give their interest. This very season, on a beautiful summer evening, I saw a happy party of eighty country folk dancing upon a greener little bit of turf than Goldsmith ever saw in France. And I wished such things were more common ; though the grave Saxon spirit, equal to the enjoyment of such gaiety now and then, might perhaps flag under it did it come too often. But on the occasion to which I refer, there was no lack of innocent cheerfulness ; the enjoyment seemed real ; and though there were no castanets and no guitars, but a fiddle for music and reels for dances, there were as pretty faces and as graceful figures among the girls, I warrant, as you would find from the Rhine to the Pyrenees.

But, to resume the somewhat ravelled thread of our discussion, — if a man has come to this, that he can feel no interest in such recreations as those which we have mentioned, what is he to do ? And let it be remembered that I am putting no fanciful case : be sorry, if you will, for the man who from taste and habit cannot be easily amused ; but remember that such is the lot of a very large proportion of the intellectual labourers of the race. And what is such a man to do ? After using his eyes and exerting his brain all the forenoon in reading and writing by way

of work, must he just use his eyes and exert his brain all the evening in reading and writing by way of play? Has it come to this, that he must find the only recreation that remains for him in the *Times*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *Fraser's Magazine*? All these things are indeed excellent in their way. They relax and interest the mind: but then they wear out the eyes, they contract the chest, and render the muscles flabby, they ruin the ganglionic apparatus, they make the mind, but unmake the body. Now that will not do. Does nothing remain, in the way of play, but the afternoon walk or drive: the vacant period between dinner and tea, when no one works, notwithstanding Johnson's warning, that he who resolves that he cannot work between dinner and tea, will probably proceed to the conclusion that he cannot work between breakfast and dinner; a little quiet gossip with your wife, a little romping with your children, if you have a wife and children; and then back again to the weary books? Think of the elder Disraeli, who looked at printed pages so long, that by and bye, wherever he looked, he saw nothing but printed pages, and then became blind. Think what poor specimens of the human animal, physically, many of our noblest and ablest men are. Do not men, by their beautiful, touching, and far-reaching thoughts, reach the heart and form the mind of thousands, who could not run a hundred yards without panting for breath, who could not jump over a five-feet wall though a mad bull were after them, who could not dig in the garden for ten minutes without having their brain throbbing and their entire frame trembling, who could not carry in a sack of coals though they should never see a fire again, who could never find a day's employment as porters, labourers, grooms, or any-

thing but tailors? Educated and cultivated men, I tell you that you make a terrible mistake; and a mistake which, before the end of the twentieth century, will sadly deteriorate the Anglo-Saxon race. You make your recreation purely mental. You give a little play to your minds, after their day's work; but you give no play to your eyes, to your brains, to your hearts, to your digestion, — in short to your bodies. And therefore you grow weak, unmuseular, nervous, dyspeptic, near-sighted, out-of-breath, neuralgic, pressure-on-the-brain, thin-haired men. And in time, not only does all the train of evils that follows your not providing proper recreation for your physical nature, come miserably to affect your spirits; but, besides that, it comes to jaundice and pervert and distort all your views of men and things. I have heard of those who, though suffering almost ceaseless pain, could yet think hopefully of the prospects of humanity, and take an unprejudiced view of some political question that appealed strongly to prejudice, and give kindly sympathy and sound advice to a poor man who came to seek advice in some little trouble which is great to him. But I fear that in the majority of instances, the human being whose liver is in a bad way, whose digestion is ruined, or even who is suffering from violent toothache, is prone to snub the servants, to box the children's ears, to think that Britain is going to destruction, and that the world is coming to an end.

It may be said, that the class of intellectual workers have their yearly holiday. August and September in each year bring with them the 'Long Vacation.' And it is well, indeed, that most men whose work is brain-work have that blessed period of relief, wherein, amid the Swiss snows, or the Highland heather, or out

upon the Mediterranean waves, they seek to re-invigorate the jaded body and mind, and to lay in a store of health and strength with which to face the winter work again. But this is not enough. A man might just as well say that he would eat in August or September all the food which is to support him through the year, as think in that time to take the whole year's recreation, the whole year's play, in one *bonne bouche*. Recreation must be a daily thing. Every day must have its play, as well as its work. There is much sound, practical sense in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*; and nowhere sounder than where he tells us that in his model country he would have 'half the day allotted for work, and half for honest recreation.' Every day, bringing, as it does, work to every man who is worth his salt in this world, ought likewise to bring its play: play which will turn the thoughts into quite new and cheerful channels; which will recreate the body as well as the mind; and tell me, Great Father of Waters, to whom Rasselas appealed upon a question of equal difficulty, — or tell me, anybody else, what that play shall be! Practically, in the case of most educated men, of most intellectual workers, heavy reading and writing stand for work, and light reading and writing stand for play.

I can well imagine what a delightful thing it must be for a toil-worn barrister to throw briefs, and cases, and reports aside, and quitting the pestilential air of Westminster Hall, laden with odours from the Thames which are not the least like those of Araby the Blest, to set off to the Highlands for a few weeks among the moors. No schoolboy at holiday-time is lighter-hearted than he, as he settles down into his corner in that fearfully fast express train on the Great Northern Railway. And when

he reaches his box in the North at last, what a fresh and happy sensation it must be to get up in the morning in that pure, unbreathed air, with the feeling that he has nothing to do, — nothing, at any rate, except what he chooses ; and after the deliberately-eaten breakfast, to saunter forth with the delightful sense of leisure, — to know that he has time to breathe and think after the ceaseless hurry of the past months, — and to know that nothing will go wrong although he should sit down on the mossy parapet of the little one-arched bridge that spans the brawling mountain-stream, and there rest, and muse, and dream just as long as he likes. Two or three such men come to this neighbourhood yearly ; and I enjoy the sight of them, they look so happy. Every little thing, if they indeed be genial, true, unstiffened men, is a source of interest to them. The total change makes them grow rapturous about matters which we, who are quite accustomed to them, take more coolly. I think, when I look at them, of the truthful lines of Gray :

See the wretch, that long has tost,
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe and walk again :

The meanest flowret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise.

Equidem invideo, a little. I feel somewhat vexed when I think how much more beautiful these pleasant scenes around me really are, than what, by any effort, I can make them seem to me. You hard-wrought town folk, when you come to rural regions, have the advantage of us leisurely country people.

But, much as that great Queen's Counsel enjoys his long vacation's play, you see it is not enough. Look how thin his hair is, how pale his cheeks are, how fleshless those long fingers, how unmuscular those arms. What he needs, in addition to the autumn holiday, is some *bonâ fide* play every day of his life. What is his amusement when in town? Why, mainly it consists of going into society, where he gains nothing of elasticity and vigour, but merely injures his digestive organs. Why does he not rather have half an hour's lively bodily exercise, — rowing, or quoits, or tennis, or skating, or anything he may have taste for? And if it be foolish to take all the year's play at once, as so many intellectual workers think to do, much more foolish is it to keep all the play of life till the work is over: to toil and moil at business through all the better years of our time in this world, in the hope that at length we shall be able to retire from business, and make the evening of life all holiday, all play. In all likelihood the man who takes this course will never retire at all, except into an untimely grave; and if he should live to reach the long-coveted retreat, he will find that all play and no work makes life quite as wearisome and as little enjoyable as all work and no play. *Ennui* will make him miserable; and body and mind, deprived of their wonted occupation, will soon break down. After very hard and long-continued work, there is indeed a pleasure in merely sitting still and doing nothing. But after the feeling of pure exhaustion is gone, *that* will not suffice. A boy enjoys play, but he is miserable in enforced idleness. In writing about retiring from the task-work of life, one naturally thinks of that letter to Wordsworth, in which Charles Lamb told what he felt when he was

finally emancipated from his drudgery in the India House :

I came home FOR EVER on Tuesday week. The incomprehensibility of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three; that is, to have three times as much real time—time that is my own—in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, and feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holidays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys, with their conscious fugitiveness, the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holiday, there are no holidays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings.

There are unhappy beings in the world, who secretly stand in fear of all play, on the hateful and wicked notion, which I believe some men regard as being of the essence of Christianity, though in truth it is its contradiction, that everything pleasant is sinful,—that God dislikes to see his creatures cheerful and happy. I think it is the author of *Friends in Council* who says something to the effect, that many people, infected with that Puritan falsehood, slink about creation, afraid to confess that they ever are enjoying themselves. It is a sad thing when such a belief is entertained by even grown-up men; but it stirs me to absolute fury when I know of it being impressed upon poor little children, to repress their natural gaiety of heart. Did you ever, my reader, read that dreary and preposterous book in which Thomas Clarkson sought to show that Quakerism is not inconsistent with common sense? Probably not; but perhaps you may have met with Jeffrey's review of it. Nothing short of a vehement kicking could relieve my feelings if I heard some sly, money-making old rascal impressing upon some merry children that

Stillness and quietness both of spirit and body are necessary, as far as they can be obtained. Hence, Quaker children are rebuked for all expressions of anger, as tending to raise those feelings which ought to be suppressed; a raising even of the voice beyond due bounds, is discouraged as leading to the disturbance of their minds. They are taught to rise in the morning in quietness; to go about their ordinary occupations with quietness; and with quietness to retire to their beds.

Can you think of more complete flying in the face of the purposes of the kind Creator? Is it not His manifest intention that childhood should be the time of merry laughter, of gaiety, and shouts, and noise? There is not a sadder sight than that of a little child prematurely subdued and 'quiet.' Let me know of any drab-coated humbug impressing such ideas on any child of mine; and though from circumstances I cannot personally see him put under the pump, I know certain quarters in which it is only needful to drop a very faint hint, in order to have him first pumped upon, and then tarred and feathered.

But there is another class of mortals, who are free from the Puritan principle, and who have no objection to amusement for themselves, but who seem to have no notion that their inferiors and their servants ought ever to do anything but work. The reader will remember the fashionable governess in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, who insisted that only genteel children should ever be permitted to play. The well-known lines of Dr. Isaac Watts, —

In books, or work, or healthful play,
Let my first years be past, —

were applicable, she maintained, only to the children of families of the wealthier sort: while for poor children there must be a new reading, which she improvised as follows: —

In work, work, work. In work alway,
Let my first years be past:
That I may give, for every day,
Some good account at last.

And as for domestic servants, poor creatures, I fear there is many a house in which there is no provision whatever made for play for them. There can be no drearier round of life than that to which their employers destine them. From the moment they rise, hours before any member of the family, to the moment when they return to bed, it is one constant push of sordid labour, — often in chambers to which air and light and cheerfulness can never come. And if they ask a rare holiday, what a fuss is made about it! Now, what is the result of all this? Some poor solitary beings do actually sink into the spiritless drudges which such a life tends to make them: but the greater number feel that they cannot live with all work and no play; and as they cannot get play openly, they get it secretly: they go out at night, when you, their mistress, are asleep; or they bring in their friends at those unreasonable hours: they get that amusement and recreation on the sly, and with the sense that they are doing wrong and deceiving, which they ought to be permitted to have openly and honestly: and thus you break down their moral principle, you train them to cheat you, you educate them into liars and thieves. Of course your servants thus regard you as their natural enemy: it is fair to take any advantage you can of a gaoler: you are their task-imposer, their driver, their gaoler, — anything but their friend; and if they can take advantage of you in any way, they will. And serve you right.

I have known injudicious clergymen who did all they could to discourage the games and sports of their parish-

ioners. They could not prevent them ; but one thing they did, — they made them disreputable. They made sure that the poor man who ran in a sack, or climbed a greased pole, felt that thereby he was forfeiting his character, perhaps imperilling his salvation : and so he thought that having gone so far, he might go the full length : and thus he got drunk, got into a fight, thrashed his wife, smashed his crockery, and went to the lock-up. How much better it would have been had the clergyman sought to regulate these amusements ; and since they *would* go on, try to make sure that they should go creditably and decently. Thus, poor folk might have been cheerful without having their conscience stinging them all the time : and let it be remembered, that if you pervert a man's moral sense (which you may quite readily do with the uneducated classes) into fancying that it is wicked to use the right hand or the right foot, while the man still goes on using the right hand and the right foot, you do him an irreparable mischief : you bring on a temper of moral recklessness ; and help him a considerable step towards the gallows. Since people must have amusement, and will have amusement ; for any sake do not get them to think that amusement is wicked. You cannot keep them from finding recreation of some sort ; you may drive them to find it at a lower level, and to partake of it soured by remorse, and by the wretched resolution that they will have it right or wrong. Instead of anathematizing all play, sympathize with it genially and heartily ; and say, with kind-hearted old Burton —

Let the world have their may-games, wakes, whitsunals ; their dancings and concerts ; their puppet-shows, hobby-horses, tabors, bagpipes, balls, barley-breaks, and whatever sports and recreations please them best, provided they be followed with discretion.

Let it be here remarked, that recreation can be fully enjoyed only by the man who has some earnest occupation. The end of the work is to enjoy leisure; but to enjoy leisure you must have gone through work. Play-time must come after schooltime, otherwise it loses its savour. Play, after all, is a relative thing; it is not a thing which has an absolute existence. There is no such thing as play, except to the worker. It comes out by contrast. Put white upon white, and you can hardly see it: put white upon black, and how plain it is. Light your lamp in the sunshine, and it is nothing: you must have darkness round it to make its presence felt. And besides this, a great part of the enjoyment of recreation consists in the feeling that we have earned it by previous hard work. One goes out for the afternoon walk with a light heart when one has done a good task since breakfast. It is one thing for a dawdling idler to set off to the Continent or to the Highlands, just because he is sick of everything around him; and quite another thing when a hard-wrought man, who is of some use in life, sets off, as gay as a lark, with the pleasant feeling that he has brought some worthy work to an end, on the self-same tour. And then a busy man finds a relish in simple recreations; while a man who has nothing to do, finds all things wearisome, and thinks that life is 'used up:' it takes something quite out of the way to tickle that indurated palate: you might as well think to prick the hide of a hippopotamus with a needle, as to excite the interest of that *blasé* being by any amusement which is not highly spiced with the cayenne of vice. And *that*, certainly, has a powerful effect. It was a glass of water the wicked old French woman was drinking when she said, 'Oh, that this were a sin, to give it a relish!'

So it is worth while to work, if it were only that we might enjoy play. Thus doth Mr. Heliogabalus, my next neighbour, who is a lazy man and an immense glutton, walk four miles every afternoon of his life. It is not that he hates exertion less, but that he loves dinner more; and the latter cannot be enjoyed unless the former is endured. And the man whose disposition is the idlest may be led to labour when he finds that labour is his only chance of finding any enjoyment in life. James Montgomery sums up much truth in a couple of lines in his *Pelican Island*, which run thus:—

Labour, the symbol of man's punishment;
Labour, the secret of man's happiness.

Why on earth do people think it fine to be idle and useless? Fancy a drone superciliously desiring a working bee to stand aside, and saying, 'out of the way, you miserable drudge; *I* never made a drop of honey in all my life!' I have observed too, that some silly people are ashamed that it should be known that they are so useful as they really are, and take pains to represent themselves as more helpless, ignorant, and incapable than the fact. I have heard a weak old lady boast that her grown-up daughters were quite unable to fold up their own dresses; and that as for ordering dinner they had not a notion of such a thing. This and many similar particulars were stated with no small exultation, and that by a person far from rich and equally far from aristocratic. 'What a silly old woman you are,' was my silent reflection; 'and if your daughters really are what you represent them, woe betide the poor man who shall marry one of the incapable young noodles.' Give me the man, I say, who can turn his hand to all things, and

who is not ashamed to confess that he can do so ; who can preach a sermon, nail up a paling, prune a fruit-tree, make a waterwheel or a kite for his little boy, write an article for *Fraser* or a leader for the *Times* or the *Spectator*. What a fine, genial, many-sided life did Sydney Smith lead at his Yorkshire parish ! I should have liked, I own, to have found in it more traces of the clergyman ; but perhaps the biographer thought it better not to parade these. And in the regard of facing all difficulties with a cheerful heart, and nobly resolving to be useful and helpful in little matters as well as big, I think that life was as good a sermon as ever was preached from pulpit.

I have already said, in the course of this rambling discussion, that recreation must be such as shall turn the thoughts into a new channel, otherwise it is no recreation at all. And walking, which is the most usual physical exercise, here completely fails. Walking has grown by long habit a purely automatic act, demanding no attention ; we think all the time we are walking ; Southey even read while he took his daily walk. But Southey's story is a fearful warning. It will do a clergyman no good whatever to leave his desk and go forth for his *constitutional*, if he is still thinking of his sermon, and trying to see his way through the treatment of his text. You see in Gray's famous poem how little use is the mere walk to the contemplative man, how thoroughly it falls short of the end of play. You see how the hectic lad who is supposed to have written the *Elegy* employed himself when he wandered abroad :

There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by

Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woful, wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

That was the fashion in which the poor fellow took his daily recreation and exercise! His mother no doubt packed him out to take a bracing walk; she ought to have set him to saw wood for the fire, or to dig in the garden, or to clean the door-handles if he had muscle for nothing more. These things would have distracted his thoughts from their grand flights, and prevented his mooning about in that listless manner. Of course while walking he was bothering away about the poetical trash he had in his desk at home; and so he knocked up his ganglionic functions, he encouraged tubercles on his lungs, and came to furnish matter for the 'hoary-headed swain's' narrative, the silly fellow!

Riding is better than walking, especially if you have a rather skittish steed, who compels you to attend to him on pain of being landed in the ditch, or sent, meteor-like, over the hedge. The elder Disraeli has preserved the memory of the diversions in which various hard thinkers found relaxation. Petavius, who wrote a deeply learned book, which I never saw, and which no one I ever saw ever heard of, twirled round his chair for five minutes every two hours that he was at work. Samuel Clark used to leap over the tables and chairs. It was a rule which Ignatius Loyola imposed on his followers, that after two hours of work, the mind should always be unbent by some recreation. Every one has heard of Paley's remarkable feats of rapid horsemanship. Hundreds of times did that great man fall off. The Sultan Mahomet, who conquered Greece, unbent his mind by carving wooden spoons. In all these things you see,

kindly reader, that true recreation was aimed at: that is, entire change of thought and occupation. Izaak Walton, again, who sets forth so pleasantly the praise of angling as the 'Contemplative Man's Recreation,' wrongly thinks to recommend the gentle craft by telling us that the angler may think all the while he plies it. I do not care for angling; I never caught a minnow; but still I joy in good old Izaak's pleasant pages, like thousands who do not care a pin for fishing, but who feel it like a cool retreat into green fields and trees to turn to his genial feeling and hearty pictures of quiet English scenery. He, however, had a vast opinion of the joys of angling in a pleasant country: only let him go quietly a-fishing:—

And if contentment be a stranger then,
I'll ne'er look for it, but in heaven, again.

And he repeats with much approval the sentiments of 'Jo. Davors, Esq.,' in whose lines we may see much more of scenery than of the actual fishing:—

Let me live harmlessly; and near the brink
Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling-place,
Where I may see my quill or cork down sink,
With eager bite of perch, or bleak, or dace:
And on the world and my Creator think:
While some men strive ill-gotten goods to embrace;
And others spend their time in base excess
Of wine, or worse, in war and wantonness.

Let them that list, these pastimes still pursue,
And on such pleasing fancies feed their fill;
So I the fields and meadows green may view,
And daily by fresh rivers walk at will,
Among the daisies and the violets blue,
Red hyacinth and yellow daffodil;
Purple narcissus like the morning's rays,
Pale gander-grass, and azure culver-keys.

All these, and many more of His creation,
 That made the heavens, the angler oft doth see,
 Taking therein no little delectation,
 To think how strange, how wonderful they be!
 Framing thereof an inward contemplation,
 To set his heart from other fancies free:
 And whilst he looks on these with joyful eye,
 His mind is rapt above the starry sky.

Who shall say that the *terza-rima* stanza was not written in English fluently and gracefully, before the days of Whistlecraft and *Don Juan*?

If thou desirest, reader, to find a catalogue of sports from which thou mayest select that which likes thee best, turn up Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, or Joseph Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*. There mayest thou read of *Rural Exercises practised by Persons of Rank*, of *Rural Exercises Generally practised*: (note how ingeniously Strutt puts the case: he does not say practised by Snobs, or the Lower Orders, or the Mobocracy.) Next are *Pastimes Exercised in Towns and Cities*; and finally, *Domestic Amusements*, and *Pastimes Appropriated to particular Seasons*. Were it not that my paper is verging to its close, I could surprise thee with a vast display of curious erudition; but I must content myself with having laid down the conditions which all true play must fulfil; and let every man choose the kind of play which hits his peculiar taste. There never has been in England any lack of sports in nominal existence: I heartily wish they were all (except the cruel ones of baiting and torturing animals) still kept up. The following lines are from a little book published in the reign of James I.:—

Man, I dare challenge thee to Throw the Sledge,
 To Jump or Leape over ditch or hedge:

To Wrastle, play at Stoodleball, or to Runne,
 To Pitch the Barre, or to shoote off a Gunne:
 To play at Loggetts, Nine Holes, or Ten Pinnes,
 To try it out at Football by the shinnes:
 At Ticktack, Irish Noddie, Maw, and Ruffe,
 At Hot Cockles, Leapfrog, or Blindmanbuffe:
 To drink half-pots, or deale at the whole canne,
 To play at Base, or Pen and ynkhorne Sir Jan:
 To daunce the Morris, play at Barley-breake,
 At all exploytes a man can think or speak:
 At Shove-Groate, Venterpoynt, or Crosse and Pile,
 At Beshrow him that's last at yonder Style:
 At leaping o'er a Midsommer-bon-fier,
 Or at the Drawing Dun out of the Myer.

In most agricultural districts it is wonderful how little play there is in the life of the labouring class. Well may the agricultural labourer be called a 'working-man,' for truly he does little else than work. His eating and sleeping are cut down to the *minimum* that shall suffice to keep him in trim for working. And the consequence is, that when he does get a holiday, he does not know what to make of himself; and in too many cases he spends it in getting drunk. I know places where the working men have no idea of any play, of any recreation, except getting drunk. And if their overwrought wives, who must nurse five or six children, prepare the meals, tidy the house, — in fact, do the work which occupies three or four servants in the house of the poorest gentleman, — if the poor overwrought creatures can contrive to find a blink of leisure through their waking hours, they know how to make no nobler use of it than to gossip, rather ill-naturedly, about their neighbours' affairs, and especially to discuss the domestic arrangements of the squire and the parson. Working men and women too frequently have forgotten how to play. It is so long since they did it, and they have so little heart for it.

And God knows that the pressure of constant care, and the wolf kept barely at arm's length from the door, do leave little heart for it. O wealthy proprietors of land, you who have so much in your power, try to infuse something of joy and cheerfulness into the lot of your humble neighbours! Read and ponder the essay and the conversation on *Recreation*, which you will find in the first volume of *Friends in Council*. And read again, I trust for the hundredth time, the poem from which I quote the lines which follow. Let me say here, that I verily believe some of my readers will not know the source whence I draw these lines. More is the shame: but longer experience of life is giving me a deep conviction of the astonishing ignorance of my fellow-creatures. I shall not tell them. They shall have the mortification of asking their friends the question. Only let it be added, that the poem where the passage stands, contains others more sweet and touching by far, — so sweet and touching that in all the range of English poetry they have never been surpassed.

How often have I blest the coming day,
 When toil remitting, lent its turn to play;
 And all the village train, from labour free,
 Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
 While many a pastime circled in the shade,
 The young contending as the old surveyed;
 And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
 And sleights of art and feats of strength went round
 And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
 Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired:
 The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
 By holding out to tire each other down, —
 The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
 While secret laughter titter'd round the place, —
 The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
 These were thy charms, sweet village, sports like these,
 With sweet succession taught even toil to please.



CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING COUNTRY HOUSES AND COUNTRY LIFE.

ONCE upon a time, I lived in the very heart of London: absolutely in Threadneedle-street. I lived in the house of a near relation, an opulent lawyer, who, after he had become a rich man, chose still to dwell in the locality where he had made his fortune. All around, for miles in every direction, there were nothing but piles of houses — streets and lanes of dingy brick houses everywhere. Not a vestige of nature could be seen, except in the sky above, in the stunted vegetation of a few little City gardens, and in the foul and discoloured river. The very surface of the earth, for yards in depth, was the work of generations that had lived and died centuries before amid the narrow lanes of the ancient city. There, for months together, I, a boy without youth, under the care of one who, though substantially kind, had not a vestige of sympathy with nature or with home affections, wearily counted the days which were to pass before the yearly visit to a home far away. I cannot by any words express the thirst and craving which I then felt for green fields and trees. The very name of *the country* was like music in my ear; and when I heard any man say he was *going down to the country*, how I envied him! It was not so bad in winter: though even then the clear frosty

days called up many pictures of cheerful winter skies away from those weary streets;—of boughs bending beneath the quiet snow;—of the beautiful fretwork of the frost upon the hedges and the grass, and of its exhilarating crispness in the air;—of the stretchers of the frozen river, seen through the leafless boughs, covered with happy groups whose merry faces were like a good-natured defiance of the wintry weather. But when the spring revival began to make itself felt; when the days began to lengthen, and the poor shrubs in the squares to bud, and when there was that accession of light during the day which is so cheerful after the winter gloom, then the longing for the country grew painfully strong, like the seaman's calenture, or the Swiss exile's yearning for his native hills. When I knew that the hawthorn hedges were white, and the fruit-trees laden with blossoms, how I longed to be among them! I well remember the kindly feeling I bore to a dingy hostelry in a narrow line off Cheapside, for the sake of its name. It was called *Blossom's Inn*; and many a time I turned out of my way, and stood looking up at its sign, with eyes that saw a very different scene from the blackened walls. I remember how I used to rise at early morning, and take long walks in whatever direction I thought it possible that a glimpse of anything like the country could be seen: away up the New North-road there were some trees, and some little plots of grass. There was something at once pleasing and sad about those curious little gardens which still exist here and there in the heart of London, consisting generally of a plot of grass of a dozen yards in length and breadth, surrounded by a walk of yellow gravel, stared at on every side by the back windows of tall brick houses, and containing a few little trees, whose

leaves in spring look so strangely fresh against the smoke-blackened branches. I do not wish to be egotistical; and I describe all these feelings merely because I believe that honestly to tell exactly what one has himself felt, is the true way to describe the common feelings of most people in like circumstances. I dare say that if any youth of sixteen, pent up in Threadneedle-street now, should happen to read what I have written, he will understand it all with a hearty sympathy which I shall not succeed in exciting in the minds of many of my readers. But such a one will know, thoroughly and completely, what pictures rise before the mind's eye of one pent up amid miles of brick walls and stone pavements, at the mention of the country, of trees, hedge-rows, fields, quiet lanes and footpaths, and simple rustic people.

I wish to assure the man, shut up in a great city, that he has compensations and advantages of which he probably does not think. The keenness of his relish for country scenes, the intensity of his enjoyment of his occasional glimpses of them, counterbalance in a great degree the fact that his glimpses of them are but few. I live in the country now, and have done so for several years. It is a beautiful district of country too, and amid a quiet and simple population; yet I must confess that my youthful notion of rural bliss is a good deal abated. 'Use lessens marvel, it is said: ' one cannot be always in raptures about what one sees every hour of every day. It is the man in populous cities pent, who knows the value of green fields. It is your cockney (I mean your educated Londoner) who reads *Bracebridge Hall* with the keenest delight, and luxuriates in the thought of country scenes, country houses, country life. He has not come close enough to discern the flaws and blemishes

of the picture; and he has not learned by experience that in whatever scenes led, human life is always much the same thing. I have long since found that the country, in this nineteenth century, is by no means a scene of Arcadian innocence;—that its apparent simplicity is sometimes dogged stupidity;—that men lie and cheat in the country just as much as in the town, and that the country has even more of mischievous tittle-tattle;—that sorrow and care and anxiety may quite well live in Elizabethan cottages grown over with honeysuckle and jasmine, and that very sad eyes may look forth from windows round which roses twine. The poets (town poets, no doubt) were drawing upon their imagination, when they told how ‘Virtue lives in Irwan’s Vale,’ and how ‘with peace and plenty there, lives the happy villager.’ Virtue and religion are plants of difficult growth, even in the country; and notwithstanding Cowper’s exquisite poem, I am not sure that ‘The calm retreat, the silent shade, with prayer and praise agree,’ better than the closet into which the weary man may enter, in the quiet evening, after the business and bustle of the town. People may pace up and down a country lane, between fragrant hedges of blossoming hawthorn, and tear their neighbours’ characters to very shreds. And the eye, that is sharp to see the minutest object on the hillside far away, may be blind to the beauty which is spread over all the landscape. Nor is the country always in the trim holiday dress which delights the summer wayfarer. Country roads are not all nicely gravelled walks between edges of clipped box, or through velvety turf, shaven by weekly mowings. There are many days on which the country looks, to any one without a most decided taste for it, extremely bleak and drear. The roads are pud-

dles of mud, which will search its way through boots to which art has supplied soles of two inches thickness. The deciduous trees are shivering skeletons, bending before the howling blast. The sheep paddle about the brown fields, eating turnips mingled with clay. Now, for myself, I like all that: but a man from the town would not. I positively enjoy the wet, blustering afternoon, with its raw wind, its driving sleet, its roads of mud. How delightful the rapid 'constitutional' from half-past two till half-past four, with the comfortable feeling that we have accomplished a good forenoon's work at our desk (sermon or article, as the case may be), and with the cheerful prospect of getting rid of all these sloppy garments, and feeling so snug and clean ere we sit down to dinner, when we shall hear the rain and wind softened into music through the warm crimson drapery of our windows; and then the evening of leisure amid books and music, with the *placens uxor*, on the other easy-chair by the fireside, and the little children, screaming with delight, tumbling about one's knees. So I like even the gusty, rainy afternoon, for the sake of all that it suggests to me. Nor will the true inhabitant of the country forget the delight with which he has hailed a gloomy, drizzling November day, when he has evergreen shrubs to transplant. Have I not stood for hours, in a state of active and sensible enjoyment, watching how the hollies and yews and laurels gradually clothed some bare spot or unsightly corner, rejoicing that the calm air and ceaseless mizzle which made my attendants and myself like soaked sponges, was life to these stout shoots and these bright hearty green leaves! But a town man does not understand all these things; and I have no doubt that on one of these January days, when the entire dis-

tant prospect — hills, sky, trees, fields — might be faithfully depicted on canvas by different shades of Indian ink, he would see nothing in the prospect but gloom and desolation.

Then it is very picturesque to see the ploughman at work on a soft, mild winter-day. It is a beautiful contrast, that light brown of the turned-over earth, and the fresh green of the remainder of the field ; and what more pleasing than these lines of furrow, so beautifully straight and regular ? But go up and walk by the ploughman's side, you man from town, and see how you like it. You will find it awfully dirty work. In a few minutes you will find it difficult to drag along your feet, laden with some pounds weight to each of adherent earth ; and you will have formed some idea of the physical exertion, and the constant attention, which the ploughman needs, to keep his furrow straight and even, to retain the plough the right depth in the ground, and to manage his horses. Hard work for that poor fellow ; and ill-paid work. No horse, mule, donkey, camel, or other beast of labour in the world, goes through so much exertion, in proportion to his strength, between sunrise and sunset, as does that rational being, all to earn the humblest shelter and the poorest fare that will maintain bare life. You walk beside him, and see how poorly he is dressed. His feet have been wet since six o'clock A. M., when he went half a mile from his cottage up to the stables of the farm to dress his horses : he has had a little tea and coarse bread, and nothing more, for his dinner at twelve o'clock (I speak from personal knowledge) : he will have nothing more till his twelve (I have known it fifteen) hours of work are finished, when he will have his scanty supper and while he is walking backwards and forwards all day,

his mind is not so engaged but that he has abundant time to think of his little home anxieties, which are not little to him, though they may be nothing, my reader, to you — of the ailing wife at home, for whom the doctor orders wine which he cannot buy, and of the children, poorly fed, and barely clad, and hardly at all educated, born to the same life of toil and penury as himself. I know nothing about political economy ; I have not understanding for it ; and I feel glad, when I think of the social evils I see, that the responsibility of treating them rests upon abler heads than mine. Neither do I know how much truth there may be in the stories of which I hear the echoes from afar, of the occasional privation and oppression of the manufacturing poor, against which, as it seems to me, these unhappy strikes and trades unions are their helpless and frantic appeal. But I can say, from my own knowledge of the condition of our agricultural population, that sometimes men bearing the character of reputable farmers practise as great tyranny and cruelty towards their labourers and cottars, under a pure sky and amid beautiful scenery, as ever disgraced the ugly and smoky factory-town, where such things seem more in keeping with the locality.

Yet, though in a gloomy mood, one can easily make out a long catalogue of country evils, — evils which I know cannot be escaped in a fallen world, and among a sinful race, — still I thank God that my lot is cast in the country. I know, indeed, that the town contains at once the best and the worst of mankind. In the country, we are, intellectually and morally, a sort of middling species ; we do not present the extremes, either in good or evil, which are to be found in the hot-house atmosphere of great cities. There is no reasoning with tastes,

as every one knows ; but to some men there is, at every season, an indescribable charm about a country life. I like to know all about the people around me ; and I do not care though in return they know all, and more than all, about me. I like the audible stillness in which one lives on autumn days ; the murmur of the wind through trees even when leafless, and the brawl of the rivulet even when swollen and brown. There is a constant source of innocent pleasure and interest in little country cares, in planting and tending trees and flowers, in sympathizing with one's horses and dogs, — even with pigs and poultry. And although one may have lived beyond middle age without the least idea that he had any taste for such matters, it is amazing how soon he will find, when he comes to call a country home his own, that the taste has only been latent, kept down by circumstances, and ready to spring into vigorous existence whenever the repressing circumstances are removed. Men in whom this is not so, are the exception to the universal rule. Take the senior wrangler from his college, and put him down in a pretty country parsonage ; and in a few weeks he will take kindly to training honeysuckle and climbing roses, he will find scope for his mathematics in laying out a flower-garden, and he will be all excitement in planning and carrying out an evergreen shrubbery, a primrose bank, a winding walk, a little stream with a tiny waterfall, spanned by a rustic bridge. Proud he will be of that piece of engineering, as ever was Robert Stephenson when he had spanned the stormy Menai. There is something in all this simple work that makes a man kind-hearted : out-of-door occupation of this sort gives one much more cheerful views of men and things, and disposes one to sympathize heartily with the cottager

proud of his little rose-plots, and of his enormous gooseberry that attained to renown in the pages of the county newspaper. I do not say anything of the incalculable advantage to health which arises from this pleasant intermingling of mental and physical occupation in the case of the recluse scholar; nor of the animated rebound with which one lays down the pen or closes the volume, and hastens out to the total change of interest which is found in the open air; nor of the evening at mental work again, but with the lungs that play so freely, the head that feels so cool and clear, the hand so firm and ready, testifying that we have not forgotten the grand truth that to care for bodily health and condition is a Christian duty, bringing with its due discharge an immediate and sensible blessing. I am sure that the poor man who comes to ask a favour of his parish clergyman, has a far better chance of finding a kind and unhurried hearing, if he finds him of an afternoon superintending his labourers, rosy with healthful exercise, delighted with the good effect which has been produced by some little improvement — the deviation of a walk, the placing of an araucaria — than if he found the parson a bilious, dyspeptic, splenetic, gloomy, desponding, morose, misanthropic, horrible animal, with knitted brow and jarring nerves, lounging in his easy-chair before the fire, and afraid to go out into the fine clear air, for fear (unhappy wretch) of getting a sore throat or a bad cough. I remember to have read somewhere of an humble philanthropist who undertook the reformation of a number of juvenile thieves; and for that end employed them in a large garden somewhere near London, to raise vegetables and flowers for the market. There did the youthful prig concentrate his thoughts on the planting of cabbage, and find the unwonted de

light of a day spent in innocent labour ; there did the area-sneak bud the rose and set the potato ; and there, as days passed on, under the gentle influence of vegetable nature, did a healthier, happier, purer tone come over the spiritual nature, even as a healthier blood came to heart and veins. The philanthropist was a true philosopher. There is not a more elevating and purifying occupation than that of tending the plants of the earth. I should never be afraid of finding a man revengeful, malignant, or cruel, whom I knew to be fond of his shrubs and flowers. And I believe that in the mind of most men of cultivation, there is some vague, undefined sense that the country is the scene where human life attains its happiest development. I believe that the great proportion of such men cherish the hope, perhaps a distant and faint one, that at some time they shall possess a country home where they may pass the last years tranquilly, far from the tumult of cities. Many of those who cherish such a hope will never realize it ; and many more are quite unsuited for enjoying a country life were it within their reach. But all this is founded upon the instinctive desire there is in human nature to possess some portion of the earth's surface. You look with indescribable interest at an acre of ground which is your own. There is something quite remarkable about your own trees. You have a sense of property in the sunset over your own hills. And there is a perpetual pleasure in the sight of a fair landscape, seen from your own door. Do not believe people who say that all scenes soon become indifferent, through being constantly seen. An ugly street may cease to be a vexation, when you get accustomed to it ; but a pleasant prospect becomes even more pleasant, when the beauty which arises from your own associations

with it is added to that which is properly its own. No doubt, you do grow weary of the landscape before your windows, when you are spending a month at some place of temporary sojourn, seaside or inland; but it is quite different with that which surrounds your own home. You do not try *that* by so exacting a standard. You never think of calling your constant residence dull, though it may be quiet to a degree which would make you think a place insupportably dull, to which you were paying a week's visit.

What an immense variety of human dwellings are comprised within the general name of the Country Home! We begin with such places as Chatsworth and Belvoir, Arundel and Alnwick, Hamilton and Drumlanrig: houses standing far withdrawn within encircling woods, approached by avenues of miles in length, which debouch on public highways in districts of country quite remote from one another; with acres of conservatory, and scores of miles of walks; and shutting in their sacred precincts by great park walls from the approach and the view of an obtrusive world beyond. We think of the old Edwardian Castle, weather-worn and grim, with drawbridge and portcullis and moat and oak-roofed hall and storied windows; of the huge, square, corniced, many-chimned, ugly building of the renaissance, which never has anything to recommend its aspect except when it gains a dignity from enormous size; then down through the classes of manor-houses, abbeys, and halls, high-gabled, oriel-windowed, turret-staired, long-corridorred haunted-chambered, with their parks, greater or less their oaken clumps, their spreading horse-chestnuts, their sunshiny glades, their startled deer; till we come to the villa with a few acres of ground, such as Dean Swift

wished for himself, with its modest conservatory, its neat little shrubbery, its short carriage drive, its brougham or phaeton drawn by one stout horse. Then, upon the outskirts of the country town, we find a class of less ambitious dwellings, which yet struggle for the title of villa — cheap would-be Gothic houses, with overhanging eaves and latticed windows, standing in a half-acre plot of ground, which yet is large enough to give a new direction to the tradesman's thoughts, by giving him space to cultivate a few shrubs and flowers. Last comes the wayside cottage, sometimes neat and pretty, often cold, damp, and ugly; sometimes gay with its little plot of flowers, sometimes odorous with its neighbouring dunghheap; the difference depending not half so much upon the income enjoyed by its tenant, as upon his having a tidy, active wife, and a kindly, improving, generous landlord.

And various as the varied dwellings, are the scenes amid which they stand. In rich English dales, in wild Highland glens, on the bank of quiet inland rivers, and on windy cliffs frowning over the ocean — there, and in a thousand other places, we have still the country home, with its peculiar characteristics. Thither comes the postman only once a day, always anxiously, often nervously expected: and thither the box of books, the magazines of last month, and the reviews of last quarter, sent from the Reading-club in the High-street of the town five miles off. How truly, by the way, has somebody or other stated that the next town and the railway station are always five miles away from every country house! Thither the carrier, three times a week, brings the wicker-woven box of bread; there does the managing housewife have her store-room, round whose shelves are arranged groceries of every sort and degree; and

there, at uncertain intervals, dies the home-fed sheep or pig, which yieldeth joints which are pronounced far superior to any which the butcher's shop ever supplied. There, sometimes, is found the cheerful, modest establishment, calculated rather within the income, with everything comfortable, neat, and even elegant; where family dinners may be enjoyed which afford real satisfaction to all, and win the approval of even the most refined *gourmet*; and there sometimes, especially when the mistress of the house is a fool, is found the unhappy scramble of the *ménagé* that, with a thousand a year, aims at aping five thousand; where there is a French ladies'-maid of cracked reputation, and a lady who talks largely of 'what she has been accustomed to,' and 'what she regards herself as entitled to;' where every-day comfort is sacrificed to occasional attempts at showy entertainments, to which the neighbouring peer goes under the pressure of a most urgent invitation; where gooseberry champagne and very acid claret flow in hospitable profusion; and where dressed-up stable-boys and ploughmen dash wildly up against each other, as the uneasy banquet strains anxiously along.

Very incomplete would be any attempt at classifying the country homes of Britain, in which no mention should be made of the dwellings of the clergy. In this country, the parish priest is not isolated from all sympathy with the members of his flock, by an enforced celibacy; he is not only the spiritual guide of his parishioners, but he is in most instances the head of a family, the cultivator of the ground, the owner of horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and dogs. I do not deny that in theory, and once perhaps in a thousand times in practice, it is a finer thing that the clergyman should be one given exclusively

to his sacred calling, standing apart from and elevated above the little prosaic cares of life, and 'having his conversation in Heaven.' It seems at first as if it better befitted one who has to be much exercised in sacred thoughts and duties — whose hands are to dispense the sacred emblems of Communion, and whose voice is to breathe direction and comfort into dying ears — to have nothing to do with such sublunary matters as seeing a cold bandage put upon a horse's foreleg, or arranging for the winter supply of hay, or considering as to laying in store of coals at the setting in of snowy weather. It jars somewhat upon our imagination of the even run of that holy calling, to think of the parson (like Sydney Smith) proudly producing his lemon-bag, or devising his patent Tantalus and his universal scratcher. But surely all this is a wrong view of things. Surely it is Platonism rather than Christianity to hold that there is anything necessarily debasing or materializing about the cares of daily life. All these cares take their character from the spirit with which we pass through them. The simple French monk, five hundred years since, who acted as cook to his brethren, indicated the clergyman's true path when he wrote, 'I put my little egg-cake on the fire for the sake of Christ;' and George Herbert, more gracefully, has shown how, as the eye may either look *on* glass, or look *through* it, we may look no farther than the daily task, or may look through it to something nobler beyond

Teach me, my God and King,
 In all things Thee to see:
 And, what I do in anything,
 To do it as for Thee.

A servant with this clause,
 Makes drudgery divine.
 Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
 Makes that, and the action, fine.

We have all in our mind some abstracted and idealized picture of what the country parsonage, as well as the country parson, should be: the latter, the clergyman and the gentleman: the former, the fit abode for him and his; near the church, not too much retired from the public way, old and ivied, of course Gothic, with bay windows, fantastic gables, wreathed chimneys, and overhanging eaves; with many evergreens, with ancient trees, with peaches ripening on the sunny garden-wall, with an indescribable calm and peacefulness over the whole, deepened by the chime of the passing river, and the windy caw of the distant rookery; such should the country parsonage be. But the best of anything is not the commonest of the class: and I can only add that I believe it would afford unmingled satisfaction to the tenant of rectory, vicarage, parsonage, deanery, or manse, if his dwelling were all that the writer would wish to see it.

It is pleasant to think over what we may call the poetry of country house-making,—the historical cases in which men have sought to idealize to the utmost the scene around them, and to live in a more ambitious or a humbler fairyland. Yet the instances that first occur to us do not encourage the belief that happiness is more certainly to be found in fairyland than in Manchester or in Siberia. One thinks of Beckford, the master of almost unlimited wealth, ‘commanding his fairy-palace to glitter amid the orange groves, and aloes, and palms of Cintra:’ and after he had formed his paradise, wearying of it, and abandoning it, to move the gloomy moralizing of *Childe Harold*. One thinks of him, not yet content with his experience, spending twenty years upon the turrets and gardens of Fonthill, that ‘cathedral turned

into a toyshop ;' whose magnificence was yet but a faint and distant attempt to equal the picture drawn by the prodigal imagination of the author of *Vathek*. One thinks of Horace Walpole, amid the gim-crackery of Strawberry-hill ; of Sir Walter Scott, building year by year that 'romance in stone and lime,' and idealizing the bleakest and ugliest portion of the banks of the Tweed, till the neglected Clartyhole became the charming but costly Abbotsford. One thinks of Shenstone, devoting his life to making a little paradise of the Leasowes, where, as Johnson tells us in his grand resounding prose, he set himself 'to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters ; which he did with such judgment and fancy as made his little domain the envy of the great and the admiration of the skilful ; a place to be visited by travellers and copied by designers.' Nor must we forget how the bitter little Pope, by the taste with which he laid out his five acres at Twickenham, did much to banish the stiff Dutch style, and to encourage the modern fashion of landscape-gardening in imitation of nature, which was so successfully carried out by the well-known Capability Brown. It is putting too extreme a case, when we pass to that which in our boyish days we all thought the perfection and delight of country residences, the island-cave of Robinson Crusoe : with its barricade of stakes which took root and grew into trees, and its impenetrable wilderness of wood, all planted by the exile's hand, which went down to the margin of the sea. It is coming nearer home, to pass to the French chateau ; the tower perched upon the rock above the Rhine ; and the German castle, which of course is somewhere in the Black Forest, frequented by robbers and haunted by ghosts. And we

ascend to the sublime in human abodes, when we think of the magnificent Alhambra, looking down proudly upon Moorish Granada: that miracle of barbaric beauty, which Washington Irving has so finely described: with its countless courts and halls, its enchanted gateways, its graceful pillars of marble of different hues, and its fountains that once made cool music for the delight of Moslem prince and peer.

We pass, by an easy transition, to the literature of country-houses, of which there are two well-marked classes. We have the real and the ideal schools of the literature of country-houses and country life: or perhaps, as both are in a great degree ideal, we should rather call them the would-be real, and the avowedly romantic. We have the former charmingly exemplified in *Bracebridge Hall*; charmingly in the Spectator's account of Sir Roger de Coverley, amid his primitive tenantry; with a little characteristic coarseness, in Swift's poem, beginning,

I've often wished that I had clear,
For life, six hundred pounds a year,—

which, by the way, is an imitation of that graceful Latin poet who delighted, so many centuries since, in his little Sabine farm. Then there are Miss Mitford's quiet, pleasing delineations of English country life; many delightful touches of it in *Friends in Council* and its sequel; and Samuel Rogers, though essentially a man of the town, has given a very complete picture of cottage life in his little poem, which thus sets out,

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
A beehive's hum shall soothe my ear:
A willowy brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall, shall linger near.

We mention all these, not of course, as a thousandth part of what our literature contains of country-houses and life, but as a sample of that mode of treating these subjects which we have termed the would-be real: and as specimens of the avowedly romantic way of describing such things, we refer to Poe's gorgeous picture of the 'Domain of Arnheim,' where his affluent imagination has run riot, under the stimulus of fancied boundless wealth; and the same author's 'Landor's Cottage,' a scene of sweet simplicity, which is somewhat spoiled by just the smallest infusion of the theatrical. The writings of Poe, with all their extraordinary characteristics, are so little known in this country, that we dare say our readers will feel obliged to us for a short account of the former piece.

A certain man, named Ellison, suddenly came into the possession of a fortune of a hundred millions sterling. Poe, you see, being wretchedly poor, did not do things by halves. Ellison resolved that he would find occupation and happiness in making the finest place in the world; and he made it. The approach to Arnheim was by the river. After intricate windings, pursued for some hours through wild chasms and rocks, the vessel suddenly entered a circular basin of water, of two hundred yards in diameter: this basin was surrounded by hills of considerable height:—

Their sides sloped from the water's edge at an angle of some forty-five degrees, and they were clothed from base to summit, not a perceptible point escaping, in a drapery of the most gorgeous flower-blossoms: scarcely a green leaf being visible among the sea of odorous and fluctuating colour. This basin was of great depth, but so transparent was the water that the bottom, which seemed to consist of a thick mass of small round alabaster pebbles, was distinctly visible by glimpses,—that is to say, whenever the eye could permit itself *not* to see, far down in the inverted heaven, the duplicate blooming of the

On these latter there were no trees, nor even shrubs of any size. * * * As the eye traced upwards the myriad-tinted slope, from its sharp junction with the water to its vague termination amid the folds of overhanging cloud, it became, indeed, difficult not to fancy a panoramic cataract of rubies, sapphires, opals, and golden onyxes, rolling silently out of the sky.

Here the visitor quits the vessel which has borne him so far, and enters a light canoe of ivory, which is wafted by unseen machinery:—

The canoe steadily proceeds, and the rocky gate of the vista is approached, so that its depths can be more distinctly seen. To the right arise a chain of lofty hills, rudely and luxuriantly wooded. It is observed, however, that the trait of exquisite *cleanness* where the bank dips into the water still prevails. There is not one token of the usual river *debris*. To the left, the character of the scene is softer and more obviously artificial. Here the bank slopes upward from the stream in a very gentle ascent, forming a broad sward of grass of a texture resembling nothing so much as velvet, and of a brilliancy of green which would bear comparison with the tint of the purest emerald. This plateau varies in breadth from ten to three hundred yards; reaching from the river bank to a wall, fifty feet high, which extends in an infinity of curves, but following the general direction of the river, until lost in the distance to the westward. This wall is of one continuous rock, and has been formed by cutting perpendicularly the once rugged precipice of the stream's southern bank; but no trace of the labour has been suffered to remain. The chiselled stone has the hue of ages, and is profusely hung and overspread with the ivy, the coral honeysuckle, the eglantine, and the clematis. * * * *

Floating gently onward, the voyager, after many short turns, finds his progress apparently barred by a gigantic gate, or rather door, of burnished gold, elaborately carved and fretted, and reflecting the direct rays of the now sinking sun with an effulgence that seems to wreath the whole surrounding forest in flames. * * * The canoe approaches the gate. Its ponderous wings are slowly and musically unfolded. The boat glides between them, and commences a rapid descent into a vast amphitheatre entirely begirt with purple mountains, whose bases are laved by a gleaming river throughout the full extent of their circuit. Meanwhile the whole Paradise of Arnhem bursts upon the view. There is a gush of entrancing melody: there is an oppressive sense of strange sweet odour: there is a dream

like intermingling to the eye of tall, slender Eastern trees, — bostky shrubberies, — flocks of golden and crimson birds, — lily-fringed lakes, — meadows of violets, tulips, poppies, hyacinths, and tuberoses, — long intertangled lines of silver streamlets, — and, upspringing confusedly from amid all, a mass of semi-Gothic, semi-Saracenic architecture, sustaining itself as if by miracle in mid-air, — glittering in the red sunlight with a hundred oriels, minarets, and pinnacles; and seeming the phantom handiwork, conjointly, of the Sylphs, the Fairies, the Genii, and the Gnomes.*

This is certainly landscape-gardening on a grand scale: but the whole thing is a shade too immediately suggestive of the *Arabian Nights*. Why not, we are disposed to say, go the entire length of Aladdin's palace at once, and give us walls of alternate blocks of silver and gold; gardens, whose trees bear fruits of diamond, emerald, ruby, and sapphire; and a roc's egg hung up in the entrance-hall? Fancy a man driving up in a post-chaise from the railway-station to a house like that! Why, the only permissible way of arriving at its front-door would be on an enchanted horse, that has brought one from Bagdad through the air; and instead of a footman in spruce livery coming out to take in one's portmanteau, I should look to be received by a porter with an elephant's head, or an afrit with bats' wings. I could not go up comfortably to my room to dress for dinner: and only fancy coming down to the drawing-room in a coat by Stulz and dress boots by Hoby! Rather should we wreath our brow with flowers, endue a purple robe, the gift of Nouredin, and perfume our handkerchief with odours which had formed part of the last freight of Sinbad the Sailor. If we made any remark, political or critical, which happened to be disagreeable to our host

* *Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. Vol. I. pp. 400-403. American Edition.

of course he would immediately change us into an ape, and transport us a thousand leagues in a second to the Dry Mountains.

But to return to the sober daylight in which ordinary mortals live, and to the sort of country in which a man may live whose fortune is less than a hundred millions, we have abundance of the literature of the country in one shape or another: poetry and poetic prose which profess to depict country life, and books of detail which profess to instruct us how to manage country concerns. We breathe a clear, cool atmosphere for which we are the better, when we turn over the pages of *The Seasons*: *that* is a book which never will become stale. Cowper's poetry is redolent of the country: and though it is all nonsense to say that 'God made the country and man made the town,' yet *The Winter Walk at Noon* almost leads us to think so. You see the Cockney's fancy that the country is a paradise, always in holiday guise, in poor Keats's lines —

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cooled for a long age in the deep-delved earth;
Tasting of Flora, and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!

And there are several books whose titles are sure to awaken pleasant thoughts in the mind of the lover of nature, who knows that, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's axiom, one green field is not just like any other green field, and who prefers a country lane to Fleet-street. There is Mr. Jesse's *Country Life*, which is mainly occupied in describing, with a minute and kindly accuracy, the ways and doings of bird, beast, and insect; and thus calling forth a feeling of interest in all our humble fellow-creatures; for in the case of inferior animals the

principle holds good, that all that is needed to make one like almost any of them is just to come to know them. And on this track one need do no more than name White's delightful *Natural History of Selborne*. There is Mr. William Howitt's *Boy's Country Book*, which sets out the sports and occupations of childhood and rural scenes, with a fulness of sympathy which makes us lament that its author should ever exchange these genial topics for the briars of polemical controversy. There is Mr. Willmott's *Summer Time in the Country*; a disappointing book; for notwithstanding the melody of its name, it is mainly a string of criticisms, good, bad, and indifferent: with a slight surrounding atmosphere, indeed, of country life; but most of the production might have been written in Threadneedle-street. There is a pleasant and well-informed little anonymous volume, called *The Flower Garden*, which contains the substance of two articles originally published in the *Quarterly Review*; and every one knows Bacon's *Essay of Gardens*, in which the writer gives the reins to his fancy, and pictures out a little paradise of thirty acres in extent, including in it some specimen of all schools of landscape gardening. Mrs. Loudon's various publications have done much to foster a taste for gardening among ladies. An exceedingly pleasing and genial book, called *The Manse Garden*, which has had a large circulation in Scotland, is intended to stimulate the Scottish clergy to neatness and taste in the arrangement of their gardens and glebes. A handsome work entitled *Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste*, lately published, contains many practical instructions for the decoration of the country home. And an elegantly illustrated volume, which appeared a few months ago, is given to *Rhymes and Roundels in*

Praise of a Country Life. Sir Joseph Paxton has not thought it unworthy of him to write a little tract, called *The Cottager's Calendar of Garden Operations*, the purpose of which is to show how much may be done in the most limited space in the way of growing vegetables for profit and flowers for ornament; and in these days, when happily the social and sanitary elevation of the masses is beginning to attract something of the notice which it deserves, I trust that reformers will not forget the powerful influence of the garden, and a taste for gardening concerns, in elevating and purifying the working man's mind, and adding interest and beauty to the working man's home. And in truth, we shall never succeed in inducing working-men to spend their evenings at home rather than in the alehouse, till we have succeeded in rendering their own homes tidy, comfortable, and inviting to a degree that shall at least equal the neatly sanded floor and the well-scrubbed benches which they can enjoy for a few pence elsewhere.

If there be any among my readers who have it in view to build a country house, I strongly recommend them to have it done by Mr. George Gilbert Scott, whose pleasantly written book on *Secular and Domestic Architecture*, will be read with delight by many who are condemned to live in towns, or who must put up with such a country home as their means permit, but who can luxuriate in imagining what kind of a house they would have if they could have exactly such a house as they wish. Mr. Scott is an out and out supporter of Gothic architecture as the best style for every possible building, large or small, in town or country, from the nobleman's palace to the labourer's cottage, from a cathedral or a town-house to a barn or a pig-sty. But Mr. Scott gives

a judicious view of Gothic architecture, as a style capable of unlimited expansion and adaptation, having in its nature the power to accommodate itself to every requirement of modern life and progress, and capable without surrendering its distinctive character, of modification, development, addition, and subtraction, to a degree which renders it the true architecture of the nineteenth century no less than of the thirteenth. It is doing Gothic architecture great injustice to speak of it as the mediæval architecture. Such a description vaguely suggests that it is a style especially suited to the requirements of life in the middle ages; and, by consequence, not well adapted to the exigencies of life at a period when life is very different from what it was in the middle ages. And the notion has been countenanced by the injudicious fashion in which houses were built at the beginning of the great reaction in favour of Gothic. When people grew wearied and disgusted at the ugly Grecian houses which disfigure so many fine old English parks, paltry and pitiful importations of a foreign style into a country which had an indigenous style incomparably superior in beauty, in comfort, in every requisite of the country house, the reaction ran into excess; and instead of building Gothic *houses*, that is, instead of trying to produce buildings which should be noble and picturesque, and at the same time commodious and convenient to live in, architects built abbeys and castles; and in those cases where they did not produce specimens of mere confectioner's Gothic, they produced buildings utterly unsuited to the exigencies and conditions of modern English life, however beautiful they might be. Now, nothing could be a more flagrant violation of the *spirit* of Gothic, than this scrupulous conformity to the *letter* of Gothic. The

true Gothic architect must hold fitness and use in view as his primary end; and his skill is shown when upon these he superinduces beauty. A fortified castle, with moat and drawbridge, arrow-slits, and donjon-keep, was a convenient and suitable building in an unsettled and lawless age. It is a most inconvenient and unsuitable building in England in the nineteenth century; and while we should prize and cherish the noble specimens of the Edwardian Castle which we possess, for their beauty and their associations, we ought to remember that if the architects who built them were living now, they would be the first to lay that style aside, as no longer suitable; and they would show the true Gothic taste and spirit in devising dwellings as noble, as picturesque, as interesting, as thoroughly Gothic in character, but fitted for the present age, and the present age's modes of life. It was not because the Edwardian Castle was grand and beautiful, that the Edwardian architects built it as they did; they built it as they did because *that* was the most suitable and convenient fashion; and upon fitness and use they engrafted grandeur and beauty. And it is not by a slavish imitation of ancient details and forms that we shall succeed in producing, at the present day, what is justly entitled to be called Gothic architecture. It is rather by a free development and carrying out of old principles applied to new circumstances and requirements. And it is the glory of Gothic, that you cannot make a new demand upon it for increased or altered accommodations and appliances, which may not, in the hand of a worthy architect, be complied with, not only without diminution of beauty, but even with increase of beauty. It is beyond comparison the most squeezable of all styles; and, provided the squeez-

ing be effected by a master's hand, the style will look all the better for it.

There is a floating belief, entirely without reason, that Gothic is exclusively an ecclesiastical fashion of building. Many people fancy that Gothic architecture suits a church; but is desecrated, or at least becomes unsuitable, when applied to secular and domestic buildings. There can be no doubt, indeed, that to every person who possesses any taste, it is a self-evident axiom that Gothic is the true church architecture: but in the age during which the noblest Gothic churches were built, it was never fancied that churches must be built in one style, and secular buildings in a style essentially dissimilar. The belief which is entertained by the true lover of Gothic architecture is this: that Gothic is essentially the most beautiful architecture; that, properly treated, it is the most commodious architecture; and that, therefore, the Gothic is the style in which all buildings, sacred or secular, public or domestic, ought to be built; with such modifications in the style of each separate building as its special purpose and use shall suggest. It must be admitted, however, that Gothic architecture has one disadvantage as compared with that architecture which is exhibited in Baker-street, in the London suburban terraces, and in the Manchester cotton-mills. Gothic architecture costs more money; but, in judicious hands, not so very much more.

As to the capacity of Gothic architecture to accommodate itself to houses of all classes, let the reader ponder the following words:

It seem to be generally imagined that the merits of the Elizabethan style are most displayed in its grand baronial residences, such as Burleigh or Hatfield. I think quite the contrary. A style is best

tested by reducing it to its humblest conditions; and the great glory of this style is, not that it produced gorgeous and costly mansions for the nobles — but that it produced beautifully simple, yet perfectly architectural, cottages for the poor; appropriate and comfortable farm-houses; and pleasant-looking residences for the smaller country-gentlemen, and for the inhabitants of country towns and villages.

Following up the same idea, Mr. Scott somewhere *else* says

What we want is a style which will stand this test — which will be pleasing in its most normal forms, yet be susceptible of every gradation of beauty, till it reach the noblest and most exalted objects to which art can aspire.

Let it be accepted as an indubitable axiom, that Gothic building is the best building for the town as well as for the country. But I am not called to enter upon that controversial ground; for we are dealing with country houses, in regard to which I believe there is no difference of opinion among people of taste and sense. The country house, as of course, must be Gothic. Tasteless blockheads will no doubt say that the Gothic house is all frippery and gingerbread (as indeed houses of confectioner's Gothic very often are): they will chuckle with delight whenever they hear that the rain has penetrated where the roof of a bay-window joins the wall, or through some ill-contrived gutter in the irregular roof of the house: they will maintain, in the face of fact, that Gothic windows will not admit sufficient light, and cannot exclude draughts: and they will praise the unpretending square-built house, 'with no nonsense about it.' Let us leave such tasteless people to the contemplation of the monstrosities they love: when the question is one of grace or beauty, *their* opinion is (as Coleridge used to say) 'neither here nor there.' Granting (which we do not grant) that Gothic architecture is out of place in the

town, and congenial and suitable in the country, I do not know that we could pay to that style any higher tribute than to say that it is the most seemly and suitable to be placed in conjunction with the fairest scenes of nature. I do not think we could say better of any work of man, than that it bears with advantage to be set side by side with the noblest works of God. Yet, though a worthy Gothic building looks beautiful anywhere, it has a special charm in a sweet country landscape. It seems just what was wanted to render the scene perfect. It is in harmony with the trees and flowers and hills around, and with the blue sky overhead. It is a perpetual pleasure to look at it. I do not believe that any mortal can find real enjoyment in standing and gazing at a huge square house, with a great wagon roof, and with square holes cut in a great level blank wall for windows. It may draw a certain grandeur from vast size : and it may possess fine accessories, — be shadowed by noble trees, backed by wild or wooded hills, and *shaded off* into the fields and lawns by courtly terraces ; but the big square box is in itself ugly, and never can be anything but ugly. But how long and delightedly one can contemplate the worthy Gothic house of similar pretension — with its lights and shadows, its irregular skyline, its great mullioned bay-windows and its graceful oriels perched aloft, its many gables, its wreathed chimneys, its towers and pinnacles, its hall and chapel boldly shown on the external outline : — for the characteristic of Gothic is, that it frankly exhibits construction, and makes a beauty of the exhibition ; while the square-box architecture aims at concealing construction, — producing the four walls, pierced with the regular rows of windows, quite irrespective of internal requirements, and then con-

sidering how to fit in the requisite apartments, like the pieces of a child's dissected puzzle, into the square case made for them. Then Gothic admits, and indeed invites, the use of external colouring : and if *that* were only accomplished by the judicious employment of those bricks of different colours which have lately been brought to great perfection, the charm which the entire building possesses to please the eye is indefinitely increased. Only let it be remembered by every man who builds a Gothic country house, that it must be built with much taste and judgment. Gothic is an ambitious style ; and it is especially so in the present state of feeling in England with regard to it. We do not think of criticising a common square house. The taste is never called into play when we look at it. It is taken for granted, *à priori*, that it must be ugly. Not so with a Gothic house. There is a pretension about *that*. The Gothic house invites us to look at it ; and, of course, to form an opinion of it. And therefore, if it be ugly, it is offensively ugly. It aims high, and it must expect severity in case of failure. The square-box house comes forward humbly : it is a goose, and does not pretend to fly. And even a goose is respectable, while it keeps to its own line. But the ugly Gothic house is a goose that hath essayed the eagle's flight ; and if it come down ignominiously to the earth, it is deservedly laughed at. And so, let no man presume to build a country house without securing the services of a thoroughly good architect. And for myself I can say, that whenever I grow a rich man and build a Gothic house, the architect shall be Mr. Scott. Indeed a person of moderate means would be safe in seeking the advice of that accomplished gentleman : for he would, it is evident, take pains to render

even a very small house a pleasing picture. He holds that a building of the smallest extent affords as decided if not as abundant scope for fine taste and careful treatment, as the grandest baronial dwelling in Britain. A cottage may be quite as pretty and pleasing as a castle or a palace could be in their more ambitious style.

Although Gothic architecture has an unlimited capacity of adapting itself to all circumstances and exigencies, yet there is a freedom about a country site which suits it bravely. In the country the architect is not hampered by want of space; he is not tied to a street-line beyond which he must not project, nor fettered by municipal regulations as to the height or sky-outline of his building. He may spread over as much ground as he pleases. And the only restrictions by which he is confined are thus set out by Mr. Scott, in terms which will commend themselves to the common sense of all readers:—

The grand principle of planning is, that every room should be in its right position — both positively and relatively to each other — to the approaches, views, and aspect; and that this should be so effected as not only to avoid disturbing architectural beauty, either within or without, but to be in the highest degree conducive to it.

In treating of *Buildings in the Country*, Mr. Scott gives us some account of his ideal of houses suited to all ranks and degrees of men. Let us look at his picture of what a villa ought to be:—

To begin, then, with the ordinary villa. Its characteristics should be quiet cheerfulness and unpretending comfort; it should, both within and without, be the very embodiment of innocent and simple enjoyment. No foolish affectation of rusticity, but the reality of everything which tends to the appreciation of country pleasures in their more refined form. The external design should so unite itself with the natural objects around, that they should appear necessary

to one another, and that neither could be very different without the other suffering. The architecture should be quiet and simple; the material that most suited to the neighbourhood — neither too formal and highly finished, nor yet too rustic. The interior should partake of the same general feeling. It should bear no resemblance to the formality of a town house; the rooms should be moderate in height, and not too rigidly regular in form; some of the ceilings should show their timbers wholly or in part; some of the windows should, if it suits the position, open out upon the garden or into conservatories. In most situations the house should spread wide rather than run up high but circumstances may vary this:

I ask my readers' attention to the paragraph which follows; it contains sound social philosophy:—

In this as in other classes of house-building, the servants' apartments should be well cared for. They should be allowed a fair share in the enjoyments provided for their masters. I have seen houses replete with comfort and surrounded with beauty, where, when you once get into the servants' rooms, you might as well be in a prison. This is morally wrong; let us give our dependents a share in our pleasures, and they will serve us none the less efficiently for it.

Every one can see how pleasant and cheerful a home a villa would be which should successfully embody Mr. Scott's views of what a villa ought to be. Such a dwelling would be quite within the reach of all who possess such a measure of income as in this country now-a-days will suffice to provide those things which are the necessities of life to people brought up as ladies and gentlemen. And with what heart and vigour a man would set himself to laying out the little piece of land around his house — to making walks, planting clumps of evergreens, and perhaps leading a little brooklet through his domain — if the house, seen from every point, were such as to be a perpetual feast to the eye and the taste! I heartily wish that the poorest clergyman in Britain had just such a parsonage as Mr. Scott has depicted, and the means of living in it without undue pinching and paring.

Then, leaving the villa, Mr. Scott points out with great taste and moderation what the cottage should be. Judiciously, he does not aim at too much. It serves no good end to represent the *beau ideal* cottage as a building so costly to erect and to maintain, that landlords of ordinary means get frightened at the mention of so expensive a toy. Cottages may be built so as to be very tasteful and pleasing, while yet the expense of their erection is so moderate that labourers tolerably well off can afford to pay such a rent for them as shall render their erection by no means an unprofitable investment of money. Not, indeed, that a landlord who feels his responsibility as he ought, will ever desire to screw a profit out of his cottagers; but it is well that it should be known that it need not entail any loss whatever to provide for the working class in the country, dwellings in which the requirements of comfort and decency shall be fulfilled. The merest touch from an artistic hand is often all that is needed to convert an ugly, though comfortable, cottage into a pretty and comfortable one. A cottage built of flint, dressed and reticulated with brick, with wood frames and mullions, and the gables of timber, will look exceedingly pleasing. Even of such inexpensive material as mud, thatched with reeds, a very pretty cottage may be built. The truth is, that nowhere is taste so much needed as in building with cheap materials. A good architect will produce a building which will form a pleasing picture, at as small a cost as it is possible to enclose a like space from the external air in the very ugliest way. Gracefulness of form adds nothing to the cost of material. And there is scope for the finest taste in disposing the very cheapest materials in the most effective and graceful fashion. I have seen a church (built,

indeed, by a first-rate architect) which was a beautiful picture, both without and within, while yet it cost so little, that I should (if I were a betting man) be content to lay any odds that no mortal could produce a building which would protect an equal number of people from the weather for less money, though with unlimited license as to ugliness.

The material *mud* is one's ideal of the very shabbiest material for building which is within human reach. *Hovel* is the word that naturally goes with *mud*. Yet Mr. Scott once built a large parsonage, which cost between two and three thousand pounds, of mud, thatched with reeds. Warmth was the end in view. I have no doubt the parsonage proved a most picturesque and quaint affair; and if I could find out where it is, I would go some distance to see it.

Having given us his idea of what a country villa and a country cottage ought to be, Mr. Scott proceeds to set out his ideal of the home of the nobleman or great landed proprietor:—

The proper expressions for a country mansion of the higher class—the residence of a landed proprietor—beyond that degree of dignity suited to the condition of the owner, are perhaps, first, a friendly, unobtruding air, giving the idea of a kind of patriarchal hospitality; a look that seems to invite approach rather than repel it. Secondly, an air which appears to connect it with the history of the country and a style which belongs to it. Thirdly, a character which harmonizes well with the surrounding scenery, and unites itself with it, as if not only were the best spot chosen for the house, and its natural beauties fostered and increased so as to render this the central focus, but further, that the house itself should seem to be the very thing which was necessary to give the last touch and finish to the scene—the object for which nature had prepared the site, and without which its charms would be incomplete.

It is not too much to say that a very great proportion

of the more ambitious dwellings of this country signally fail of coming up to these conditions, and serve only to disfigure the beautiful parks in which they stand. A huge Palladian house entirely lacks the genial, hearty, inviting look of the Elizabethan or Gothic house. Instead of having a look of that hospitality and welcome which we are proud to think of as especially English, the Palladian mansion is merely suggestive, as Mr. Scott remarks, of gamekeepers and park-rangers on the watch to turn all intruders out. Our author would have the architect who is entrusted with the building of a house of this class, retain in its design all that is practically useful and noble in the Elizabethan mansion—at the same time remembering that Elizabethan architecture is Gothic somewhat debased, and that its details, where faulty, should be set aside, and their place supplied by those of an earlier and purer period. Nor should it be forgotten that the purest and noblest Gothic is the most willing to bend itself to the requirements of altered circumstances: and it is therefore needful that the architect, in forming his plan, should hold it steadily in view that he is building a house which is to be inhabited by a nobleman or gentleman of the latter half of the nineteenth century; and which must therefore be thoroughly suited to the demands of our own day, and our own day's modes and habits of thought and life. And the castle and the abbey, though both quite unfit to be taken as models out-and-out, may yet supply hints for noble and dignified details in the designing of a modern English home. Thus, borrowing ideas from all quarters, Mr. Scott would produce a noble dwelling—strictly Gothic in design—thoroughly English in its entire character—at once majestic and comfortable—at once dignified and inviting—with a mediæval nobility

of aspect, and with the reality of every arrangement which our advanced civilization and increased refinement can require or suggest. As for lesser details, is there not something in the following passage which makes an architectural epicure's mouth water?

The chapel and corridors perhaps richly vaulted in stone — the hall nobly roofed with oak — the ceilings of the rooms either boldly showing their timbers, partially or throughout, or richly panelled with wood; or if plastered, treated genuinely and truthfully, without aping ideas borrowed from other materials: the floors of halls and passages paved with stone, tile, marble, enriched with incised or tessellated work, or a union of all; those of the leading apartments of polished oak and parqueterie (the rendering of mosaie into wood); rich wainscoting used where suitable, and the woodwork throughout honestly treated, and of character proportioned to its position, not neglecting the use of inlaying in the richer woods; marble liberally used in suitable positions, the plainer kinds inlaid and studiously contrasted with the richer; the coloured decorations, whether of walls or ceilings, or in stained glass, delicately and artistically treated, and of the highest art we can obtain, and everywhere proportioned to their position; historical and fresco painting freely used, and in a style at once suited to the architecture, and thoroughly free from what may be called mediævalism, in the sense in which the term is misused to imply an antiquated, grotesque, or imperfect mode of drawing; all of these, and an infinity of other modes of ornamentation, are open to the architect in this class of building.

It is pleasant to read well-written descriptions of human dwellings in which art has done all it can do towards providing a pleasant and beautiful setting for human life. Such is Mr. Loudon's account of what he calls the *beau ideal English Villa*, in his *Cyclopædia of Rural Architecture*. Such is Mr. Scott's sketch of the *beau ideal* of a nobleman's house at the present day. The latter forms a pleasing companion picture to that long since drawn by the affluent imagination of Bacon. All who have a taste for such things will read it with great delight; nor

will it tend in the least degree to make the true lover of the country envious or discontented. I can turn with perfect satisfaction from that grand description to my own little parsonage. There is a peculiar comfort and interest about a little place, which vanishes with increasing magnitude and magnificence. And it is a law of all healthy mind, that what is one's own has an attraction for one's self far beyond that possessed by much finer things which belong to another. A man with one little country abode, may have more real delight in it, than a duke has in his wide demesnes. Indeed, I heartily pity a duke with half-a-score of noble houses. He can never have a *home feeling* in any one of them. While the possessor of a few acres knows every corner and every tree and shrub in his little realm ; and knows what is the aspect of each upon every day of the year. I speak from experience. I am the possessor of twelve acres of mother earth ; and I know well what pleasure and interest are to be found in the little affairs of that limited tract. My study-window looks out upon a corner of the garden ; a blank wall faces it at a distance of five-and-twenty feet. When I came here, I found that corner sown with potatoes, and that wall a dead expanse of stone and mortar. But I resolved to make the most of my narrow view, and so contrive that it should look cheerful at every season. And now the corner is a little square of as soft and well-shaven green turf as can be seen ; through which snow-drops and crocuses peep in early spring ; its surface is broken by two clumps of evergreens, laurels, hollies, cedars, yews, which look warm and pleasant all the winter-time ; and over one clump rises a standard rose of ten feet in height, which, as I look up from my desk through my window, shows like a crimson cloud in sum-

mer. The blank wall is blank no more, but beautiful with climbing roses, honeysuckle, fuchsias, and variegated ivy. What a pleasure it was to me, the making of this little improvement; and what a pleasure it is still every time I look at it! No one can sympathize justly with the feeling till he tries something of the sort for himself. And not merely is such occupation as that which I speak of a most wholesome diversity from mental work. It has many other advantages. It leads to a more intelligent delight in the fairest works of the Creator; and though it might be hard to explain the logical steps of the process, it leads a man to a more kindly and sympathetic feeling towards all his fellow men. Have not I, unfaithful that I am, spent the forenoon in writing a very sharp review of some foolish book; and then, having gone out to the garden for two or three hours, come in, thinking that after all it would be cruel to give pain to the poor fellow who wrote it; and so proceeded to weed out everything severe, and give the entire article a rather complimentary turn!

It is a vain fancy to try to sketch out the kind of life which is to be led in the country house after we get it. For almost every man gradually settles into a habitude of being which is rather formed by circumstances than adopted of purpose and by choice. Only let it be remembered, that pleasure disappears when it is sought as an end. Happiness is a thing that is come upon incidentally, while we are looking for something else. The man who would enjoy country life in a country home, must have an earnest occupation besides the making and delighting in his home, and the sweet scenes which surround it. If *that* be all he has to do, he will soon turn

weary, and find that life, and the interest of life, have stagnated and scummed over. The end of work is to enjoy leisure; but to enjoy leisure one must have performed work. It will not do to make the recreation of life the business of life. But I believe, that to the man who has a worthy occupation to fill up his busy hours, there is no purer or more happy recreation than may be found in the cares and interests of the country home.



CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING TIDINESS:

BEING THOUGHTS UPON AN OVERLOOKED SOURCE OF
HUMAN CONTENT.

SAID Sydney Smith to a lady who asked him to recommend a remedy for low spirits, — Always have a cheerful, bright fire, a kettle simmering on the hob, and a paper of sugar-plums on the mantelpiece.

Modern grates, it is known, have no hobs; nor does it clearly appear for what purpose the kettle was recommended. If for the production of frequent cups of tea, I am not sure that the abundant use of that somewhat nervous and vaporous liquid is likely to conduce to an equal cheerfulness. And Sydney Smith, although he must have become well acquainted with whisky-toddy during his years in Edinburgh, would hardly have advised a lady to have recourse to alcoholic exhilaration, with its perilous tendencies and its subsequent depression. Sugar-plums, again, damage the teeth, and produce an effect the reverse of salutary upon a most important organ, whose condition directly affects the spirits. As for the bright fire, *there* the genial theologian was certainly right: for when we talk, as we naturally do, of a *cheerful* fire, we testify that long experience has proved that this pecu-

liarly British institution tends to make people cheerful. But, without committing myself to any approval of the particular things recommended by Sydney Smith, I heartily assent to the principle which is implied in his advice to the nervous lady: to wit, that cheerfulness and content are to a great degree the result of outward and physical conditions; let me add, the result of very little things.

Time was, in which happiness was regarded as being perhaps too much a matter of one's outward lot. Such is the belief of a primitive age and an untutored race. Every one was to be happy, whatever his mental condition, who could but find admittance to Rasselas' *Happy Valley*. The popular belief that there might be a scene so fair that it would make blest any human being who should be allowed to dwell in it, is strongly shown in the name universally given to the spot which was inhabited by the parents of the race before evil was known. It was the *Garden of Delight*: and the name describes not the beauty of the scene itself, but the effect it would produce upon the mind of its tenants. The paradises of all rude nations are places which profess to make every one happy who enters them, quite apart from any consideration of the world which he might bear within his own breast. And the pleasures of these paradises are mainly addressed to sense. The gross Esquimaux went direct to eating and drinking: and so his heaven (if we may believe Dr. Johnson) is a place where 'oil is always fresh, and provisions always warm.' He could conceive nothing loftier than the absence of cold meat, and the presence of unlimited blubber. Quite as gross was the Paradise of the Moslem, with its black-eyed houris, and its musk-sealed wine: and the same principle, that the outward scene and circumstances in which a man is placed

are able to make him perfectly and unfailingly happy, whatever he himself may be, is taken for granted in all we are told of the Scandinavian Valhalla, the Amenti of the old Egyptian, the Peruvian's Spirit-World, and the Red Man's Land of Souls. But the Christian Heaven, with deeper truth, is less a locality than a character : its happiness being a relation between the employments provided, and the mental condition of those who engage in them. It was a grand and a noble thing, too, when a Creed came forth, which utterly repudiated the notion of a Fortunate Island, into which, after any life you liked, you had only to smuggle yourself, and all was well. It was a grand thing, and an intensely practical thing, to point to an unscen world, which will make happy the man who is prepared for it, and who is fit for it ; and no one else.

And, to come down to the enjoyments of daily life, the time was when happiness was too much made a thing of a quiet home, of a comfortable competence, of climbing roses and honeysuckle, of daisies and buttercups, of new milk and fresh eggs, of evening bells and mist stealing up from the river in the twilight, of warm firesides, and close-drawn curtains, and mellow lamps, and hissing urns, and cups of tea, and easy chairs, and old songs, and plenty of books, and laughing girls, and perhaps a gentle wife and a limited number of peculiarly well-behaved children. And indeed it cannot be denied that if these things, with health and a good conscience, do not necessarily make a man contented, they are very likely to do so. One cannot but sympathize with the spirit of snugness and comfort which breathes from Cowper's often-quoted lines, though there is something of a fallacy in them. Here they are again : they are pleasant to look at : —

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
 And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
 That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

I have said there is a fallacy in these lines. It is not that they state anything which is not quite correct, but that they contain a *suggestio falsi*. Although Cowper does not directly say so, you see he leaves on your mind the impression that if all these arrangements are made — the fire stirred, the curtains drawn, the sofa wheeled round, and so forth — you are quite sure to be extremely jolly, and to spend a remarkably pleasant evening. Now the fact is quite otherwise. You may have so much anxiety and care at your heart, as shall entirely neutralize the natural tendency of all these little bits of outward comfort; and no one knew that better than the poor poet himself. But that which Cowper does but insinuate, an unknown verse-writer boldly asserts: to wit, that outward conditions are able to make a man as happy as it is possible for man to be. He writes in the style which was common a couple of generations back; but he really makes a pleasant homely picture: —

The hearth was clean, the fire was clear,
 The kettle on for tea;
 Palemon in his elbow-chair,
 As blest as man could be.

Clarinda, who his heart possessed,
 And was his new-made bride,
 With head reclined upon his breast,
 Sat toying by his side.

Stretched at his feet, in happy state,
 A favourite dog was laid,

By whom a little sportive cat
In wanton humour played.

Clarinda's hand he gently pressed:
She stole a silent kiss;
And, blushing, modestly confessed
The fulness of her bliss.

Palemon, with a heart elate,
Prayed to Almighty Jove,
That it might ever be his fate,
Just so to live and love.

Be this eternity, he cried,
And let no more be given;
Continue thus my loved fireside, —
I ask no other heaven!

Poor fellow! It is very evident that he had not been married long. And it is charitable to attribute the wonderful extravagance of his sentiments to temporary excitement and obfuscation. But without saying anything of his concluding wish, which appears to border on the profane, we see in his verses the expression of the rude belief that, given certain outward circumstances, a man is sure to be happy.

Perhaps the pendulum has of late years swung rather too far in the opposite direction, and we have learned to make too little of external things. No doubt the true causes of happiness are *inter præcordia*. No doubt it touches us most closely, whether the world within the breast is bright or dark. No doubt content, happiness, our being's end and aim, call it what you will, is an inward thing, as was said long ago by the Latin poet, in words which old Lord Auchinleck (the father of Johnson's Boswell) inscribed high on the front of the mansion which he built amid the Scottish woods and rocks 'where Lugar flows: ' —

Quod petis, hic est;
Est Ulubris: animus si te non deficit æquus.

But then the question is, how to get the *animus æquus* and I think that now-a-days there is with some a disposition to push the principle of

My mind to me a kingdom is,

too far. Happiness is indeed a mental condition, but we are not to forget that mental states are very strongly, very directly, and very regularly affected and produced by outward causes. In the vast majority of men outward circumstances are the great causes of inward feelings, and you can count almost as certainly upon making a man jolly by placing him in happy circumstances, as upon making a man wet by dipping him in water. And I believe a life which is too subjective is a morbid thing. It is not healthy nor desirable that the mind's shadow and sunshine should come too much from the mind itself. I believe that when this is so, it is generally the result of a weak physical constitution: and it goes along with a poor appetite and shaky nerves: and so I hail Sydney Smith's recommendation of sugar-plums, bright fires, and simmering kettles, as the recognition of the grand principle that mental moods are to a vast extent the result of outward conditions and of physical state. If Macbeth had asked Dr. Forbes Winslow the question —

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?

that eminent physician would instantly have replied, — 'Of course I can, by ministering to a body diseased.' No doubt such mental disease as Macbeth's is beyond the reach of opiate or purgative, and neither sin nor remorse can be cured by sugar-plums. But as for the little depressions and troubles of daily life, I believe that Sydney

Smith proposed to treat them soundly. Treat them physically. Treat them *ab extra*. Don't expect the mind to originate much good for itself. With commonplace people it is mainly dependent upon external influences. It is not a perennial fountain, but a tank which must be replenished from external springs. For myself, I never found my mind to be to me a kingdom. If a kingdom at all; it was a very sterile one, and a very unruly one. I have generally found myself, as my readers have no doubt sometimes done, a most wearisome and stupid companion. If any man wishes to know the consequence of being left to his own mental resources, let him shut himself up for a week, without books or writing-materials or companions, in a chamber lighted from the roof. He will be very sick of himself before the week is over: he will (I speak of commonplace men) be in tolerably low spirits. The effect of solitary confinement, we know upon uneducated prisoners, is to drive them mad. And not only do outward circumstances mainly make and unmake our cheerfulness, but they affect our intellectual powers just as powerfully. They spur or they dull us. Till you enjoy, after long deprivation, the blessing of converse with a man of high intellect and cultivation, you do not know how much there is in you. Your powers are stimulated to produce thought of which you would not have believed yourself capable. And have not you felt, dear reader, when in the society of a blockhead, that you became a blockhead too? Did you not feel your mind sensibly contracting, like a ball of india-rubber, when compressed by the dead weight of the surrounding atmosphere of stupidity? But when you had a quiet evening with your friend Dr. Smith, or Mr. Jones, a brilliant talker, did he not make you talk too with (comparative)

brilliancy? You found yourself saying much cleverer things than you had been able to say for months past. The machinery of your mind played fervidly; words came fittingly, and thoughts came crowding. The friction of two minds of a superior class, will educe from each much finer thought than either could have produced when alone.

And now, my friendly reader, the upshot of all this which I have been saying is, that I desire to recommend to you a certain overlooked and undervalued thing, which I believe to be a great source of content and a great keeper-off of depression. I desire to recommend something which I think ought to supplant Sydney Smith's kettle and sugar-plums, and which may co-exist nicely with his cheerful fire. And I beg the reader to remark what the end is towards which I am to prescribe a means. It is not *suprema felicitas*: it is quiet content. The happiness which we expect at middle age is a calm, homely thing. We don't want raptures: they weary us, they wear us out, they shatter us. We want quiet content; and above all, we want to be kept clear of over-anxiety and of causeless depression. As for such buoyancy as that of Sydney Smith himself, who tells us that when a man of forty he often longed to jump over the tables and chairs in pure glee and light-heartedness, — why, if nature has not given you *that*, you must just do without it. Art cannot give it you: it must come spontaneous if it come at all. But what a precious thing it is! Very truly did David Hume say, that for a man to be born with a fixed disposition always to look at the bright side of things, was a far happier thing than to be born to a fortune of ten thousand a year. But Hume was right, too, when he talked of *being born with* such a disposition. The hope-

ful, unanxious man, quite as truly as the poet, *nascitur, non fit*. No training could ever have made the nervous, shrinking, evil-foreboding Charlotte Brontë like the gleeful, boisterous, life-enjoying Christopher North. There were not pounds enough in that little body to keep up a spirit like that which dwelt in the Scotch Professor's stalwart frame. And to indicate a royal road to constant light-heartedness is what no man in his senses will pretend to do. But we may attain to something humbler. Sober content is, I believe, within the reach of all who have nothing graver to vex them than what James Montgomery the poet called the 'insect cares' of daily life. There may be, of course, lots which are darkened over by misfortunes so deep that to brighten *them* all human skill would be unavailing. But ye who are commonplace people, — commonplace in understanding, in feeling, in circumstances; ye who are not very clever, not extraordinarily excitable, not extremely unlucky; ye who desire to be, day by day, equably content and even passably cheerful; listen to me while I recommend, in subordination of course to something too serious to discuss upon this half-earnest page, the maintenance of a constant, pervading, active, all-reaching, energetic TIDINESS!

No fire that ever blazed, no kettle that ever simmered, no sugar-plums that ever corroded the teeth and soothed to tranquil stupidity, could do half as much to maintain a human being in a condition of moderate jollity and satisfaction, as a daily resolute carrying out of the resolution, that everything about us, — our house, our wardrobe, our books, our papers, our study-table, our garden-walks, our carriage, our harness, our park-fences, our children, our lamps, our gloves, yea, our walking-stick and our um-

rella, shall be in perfectly accurate order ; that is, shall be, to a hair's breadth, RIGHT !

If you, my reader, get up in the morning, as you are very likely to do in this age of late dinners, somewhat out of spirits, and feeling (as boys expressively phrase it), rather *down in the mouth*, you cannot tell why ; if you take your bath and dress, having still the feeling as if the day had come too soon, before you had gathered up heart to face it and its duties and troubles ; and if, on coming down stairs, you find your breakfast-parlour all in the highest degree snug and tidy, — the fire blazing brightly and warmly, the fire-irons accurately arranged, the hearth clean, the carpet swept, the chairs dusted, the breakfast equipage neatly arranged upon the snow-white cloth, — it is perfectly wonderful how all this will brighten you up. You will feel that you would be a growling humbug if you did not become thankful and content. ‘Order is Heaven’s first law :’ and there is a sensible pleasure attending the carrying of it faithfully out to the smallest things. Tidiness is nothing else than the carrying into the hundreds of little matters which meet us and touch us hour by hour, the same grand principle which directs the sublimest magnitudes and affairs of the universe. Tidiness is, in short, the being right in thousands of small concerns in which most men are slovenly satisfied to be wrong. And though a hair’s breadth may make the difference between right and wrong, the difference between right and wrong is not a little difference. An untidy person is a person who is wrong, and is doing wrong, for several hours every day ; and though the wrong may not be grave enough to be indicated by a power so solemn as conscience (as the current through the Atlantic cable after it had been injured, though a

magnetic current, was too faint to be indicated by the machines now in use), still, constant wrong-doing, in however slight a degree, cannot be without a jar of the entire moral nature. It cannot be without putting us out of harmony with the entire economy under which we live. And thus it is that the most particular old bachelor, or the most precise old maid, who insists upon everything about the house being in perfect order, is, in so far, co-operating with the great plan of Providence; and, like every one who does so, finds an innocent pleasure result from that unintended harmony. Tidiness is a great source of cheerfulness. It is cheering, I have said, even to come into one's breakfast room, and find it spotlessly tidy; but still more certainly will this cheerfulness come if the tidiness is the result of our own exertion.

And so I counsel you, my friend, if you are ever disheartened about some example which has been pressed upon you of the evil which there is in this world; if you get vexed and worried and depressed about some evil in the government of your country, or of your county, or of your parish; if you have done all you can to think how the evil may be remedied; and if you know that further brooding over the subject would only vex and sting and do no good;—if all this should ever be so, then I counsel you to have resort to the great refuge of Tidiness. Don't sit over your library fire, brooding and bothering; don't fly to sugar-plums, they will not avail. There is a corner of one of your fields that is grown up with nettles; there is a bit of wall or of palisade out of repair; there is a yard of the edging of a shrubbery walk where an overhanging laurel has killed the turf; there is a bed in the garden which is not so scrupulously tidy as it ought to be; there is a branch of a peach-tree that has

pulled out its fastenings to the wall, and that is flapping about in the wind. Or there is a drawer of papers which has for weeks been in great confusion; or a division of your bookcase where the books might be better arranged. See to these things forthwith: the out-of-door matters are the best. Get your man-servant — all your people, if you have half-a-dozen — and go forth and see things made tidy: and see that they are done thoroughly; work half done will not serve for our present purpose. Let every nettle be cut down and carried off from the neglected corner; then let the ground be dug up and levelled, and sown with grass seed. If it rains, so much the better: it will make the seed take root at once. Let the wall or fence be made better than when it was new; let a wheelbarrow-full of fresh green turf be brought; let it be laid down in place of the decayed edging; let it be cut accurately as a watch's machinery; let the gravel beside it be raked and rolled: then put your hands in your pockets and survey the effect with delight. All this will occupy you, interest you, dirty you, for a couple of hours, and you will come in again to your library fireside quite hopeful and cheerful. The worry and depression will be entirely gone; you will see your course beautifully: you have sacrificed to the good genius of Tidiness, and you are rewarded accordingly. I am simply stating phenomena, my reader. I don't pretend to explain causes; but I hesitate not to assert, that to put things *right*, and to know that things are put right, has a wonderful effect in enlivening and cheering. You cannot tell why it is so; but you come in a very different man from what you were when you went out. You see things in quite another way. You wonder how you could have plagued yourself so much before. We

all know that powerful effects are often produced upon our minds by causes which have no logical connection with these effects. Change of scene helps people to get over losses and disappointments, though not by any process of logic. If the fact that Anna Maria cruelly jilted you, thus consigning you to your present state of single misery, was good reason why you should be snappish and sulky in Portland-place, is it not just as good reason now, when, in the midst of a tag-rag procession you are walking into Chamouni after having climbed Mont Blanc? The state of the facts remains precisely as before. Anna Maria is married to Mr. Dunderhead, the retired ironmonger with ten thousand a year. Nor have any new arguments been suggested to you beyond those which Smith good-naturedly addressed to you in Lincoln's Inn-square, when you threatened to punch his head. But you have been up Mont Blanc; you have nearly fallen into a crevasse; your eyes are almost burnt out of your head. You have looked over that sea of mountains which no one that has seen will ever forget; here is your alpen-stock, and you shall carry it home with you as an ancient palmer his faded branch from the Holy Land. And though all this has nothing earthly to do with your disappointment, you feel that somehow all this has tided you over it. You are quite content. You don't grudge Anna Maria her ferruginous happiness. You are extremely satisfied that things have turned out as they did. The sale of nails, pots, and gridirons is a legitimate and honourable branch of commercial enterprise. And Mr. Dunderhead, with all that money, must be a worthy and able man.

I am writing, I need hardly say, for ordinary people

when I suggest Tidiness as a constant source of temperate satisfaction. Of course great and heroic men are above so prosaic a means of content. Such amiable characters as Roderick Dhu, in the *Lady of the Lake*, as Byron's *Giaour* and *Lara*, not to name *Childe Harold*, as the heroes of *Locksley Hall* and *Maud*, and Mr. Bailey's *Festus*, would no doubt receive my humble suggestions very much as Mynheer Van Dunk, who disposed of his two quarts of brandy daily, might be supposed to receive the advice to substitute for his favourite liquor an equal quantity of skimmed milk. And possibly Mr. Disraeli would not be content out of office, however orderly and tidy everything about his estate and his mansion might be. Yet it is upon record that a certain ancient emperor, who had ruled the greatest empire this world ever saw, found it a pleasant change to lay the sceptre and the crown aside, and, descending from the throne, to take to cultivating cabbages. And as he looked at the tidy rows and the bunchy heads, he declared that he had changed his condition for the better; that tidiness in a cabbage-garden could make a man happier than the imperial throne of the Roman Empire. It is well that it should be so, as in this world there are many more cabbage-gardens than imperial thrones; and tidiness is attainable by many by whom empire is not attainable.

A disposition towards energetic tidiness is a perennial source of quiet satisfaction. It always provides us with something to think of and to do: it affords scope for a little ingenuity and contrivance: it carries us out of ourselves: and prevents our leading an unhealthily subjective life. It gratifies the instinctive love of seeing things *right* which is in the healthy human being. And it

is founded upon the philosophical fact, that there is a peculiar satisfaction in having a thing, great or small, which was wrong, put right. You have greater pleasure in such a thing, when it has been fairly set to rights, than if it never had been wrong. Had Brummell been a philosopher instead of a conceited and empty-pated coxcomb, I should at once have understood, when he talked of 'his favourite leg,' that he meant a leg which had been fractured, and then restored as good as ever. Is it a suggestion too grave for this place, that this principle of the peculiar interest and pleasure which are felt in an evil remedied, a spoiled thing mended, a wrong righted, may cast some light upon the Divine dealing with this world? It is fallen indeed, and evil: but it will be set right. And *then*, perhaps, it may seem better to its Almighty Maker than even on the First Day of Rest. And the human being who systematically keeps right, and sets right, all things, even the smallest, within his own little dominion, enjoys a pleasure which has a dignified foundation; which is real, simple, innocent, and lasting. Never say that it is merely the fidgety particularity of an old bachelor which makes him impatient of suffering a weed or a withered leaf on his garden walk, a speck of dust on his library table, or a volume turned upside down on his shelves. He is testifying, perhaps unconsciously, to the grand, sublime, impassable difference between Right and Wrong. He is a humble combatant on the side of Right. He is maintaining a little outpost of the lines of that great army which is advancing with steady pace, conquering and to conquer. And if the quiet satisfaction he feels comes from an unexciting and simple source — why, it is just from such sources that the quiet content of daily life must come

We cannot, from the make of our being, be always or be long in an excitement. Such things wear us and themselves out: and they cannot last. The really and substantially happy people of this world are always calm and quiet. In feverish youth, of course, young people get violently spoony, and are violently ambitious. *Then*, life is to be all romance. They are to live in a work over which there spreads a light such as never was on land or sea. They think that Thekla was right when she said, as one meaning that life, for her, was done, 'I have lived and loved!' Mistaken she! The solid work of life was then just beginning. She had just passed through the moral scarlet-fever; and the noblest, greatest, and happiest part of life was to come. And as for the dream of ambition, *that* soon passes away. A man learns to work, not to make himself a famous name, but to provide the wherewithal to pay his butcher's and his grocer's bills. Still, who does not look back on that time with interest! Was it indeed ourselves, now so sobered, grave, and matter-of-fact, whom we see as we look back?

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement which the coming years would
yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn.

But just what London proves to the eager-hearted boy, life proves to the man. He intended to be Lord Chancellor: he is glad by-and-bye to get made an Insolvent Commissioner. He intended to be a millionaire: he is glad, after some toiling years, to be able to pay his house-

rent and make the ends meet. He intended to startle the quiet district of his birth, and make his mother's heart proud with the story of his fame: he learns to be glad if he does his home no discredit, and can now and then send his sisters a ten-pound note:—

So sleeps the pride of former days,
 So glory's thrill is o'er:
 And hearts that once beat high for praise,
 Now feel that pulse no more!

But though these excitements be gone, there still remains to the middle-aged man the calm pleasure of looking at the backs of the well-arranged volumes on his book-shelves; of seeing that his gravel-walks are nicely raked, and his grass-plots smoothly mown; of having his carriage, his horses, and his harness in scrupulous order; the harness with the silver so very bright and the leather so extremely black, and the horses with their coats so shiny, their ribs so invisible, and all their corners so round. Now, my reader, all these little things will appear little only to very unthinking people. From such little things comes the quiet content of commonplace middle life, of matter-of-fact old age. I never admired or liked anything about Lord Melbourne so much as that which I shall now tell you in much better words than my own:—

He went one night to a minor theatre, in company with two ladies and a fashionable young fellow about town—a sort of man not easy to be pleased.

The performance was dull and trashy enough, I daresay. The next day Lord Melbourne called upon the ladies. The fashionable young gentleman had been there before his lordship, and had been complaining of the dreadfully dull evening they had all passed. The ladies mentioned this to Lord Melbourne. 'Not pleased! Not pleased! Confound the man! Didn't he see the fishmongers' shops, and the

gas-lights flashing from the lobsters' backs, as we drove along? Wasn't that happiness enough for him?

Lord Melbourne had then ceased to be Prime Minister, but you see he had not ceased to take pleasure in any little thing that could give it.*

Now, is not all this an admirable illustration of my great principle, that the tranquil enjoyment of life comes to be drawn a good deal from external sources, and a great deal more from very little things? An ex-Prime Minister thought that the sight of lobsters' backs shining in the gas-light, was quite enough to make a reasonable man content for one evening. But give me, say I, not the fleeting joy of the lobsters' backs, any more than Sydney Smith's sugar-plums, lazy satisfactions partaken in passiveness. Give me the perennial, calm, active, stimulating moral and intellectual content which comes of living amid hundreds of objects and events which are all scrupulously RIGHT; and thus, let us all (as Wordsworth would no doubt have written had I pressed the matter upon him)

feed this mind of ours,
In a wise TIDINESS!

I have long wished to write an essay on Tidiness; for it appears to me that the absence of this simple and humble quality is the cause of a considerable part of all the evil and suffering, physical and moral, which exist among ordinary folk in this world. Most of us, my readers, are little people; and so it is not surprising that our earthly comfort should be at the mercy of little things. But even if we were, as some of us probably think ourselves, very great and eminent people, not the less would our content be liable to be disturbed by very small mat-

* 'Friends in Council Abroad.' *Fraser's Magazine*, vol. liii. p. 2. (January, 1856.)

ters. A few gritty grains of sand finding their way amid the polished shafts and axles of some great piece of machinery, will suffice to send a jar through it all; and a single drop of a corroding acid falling ceaselessly upon a bright surface will speedily ruin its brightness. And in the life of many men and women, the presence of that physical and mental confusion and discomfort which result from the absence of tidiness, is just that dropping acid, those gritty particles. I do not know why it is that by the constitution of this universe, evil has so much more power than good to produce its effect and to propagate its nature. - One drop of foul will pollute a whole cup of fair water; but one drop of fair water has no power to appreciably improve a cup of foul. Sharp pain, present in a tooth or a toe, will make the whole man miserable, though all the rest of his body be easy; but if all the rest of the body be suffering, an easy toe or tooth will cause no perceptible alleviation. And so a man with an easy income, with a pretty house in a pleasant neighbourhood, with a good-tempered wife and healthy children, may quite well have some little drop of bitterness day by day infused into his cup, which will take away the relish of it all. And this bitter drop, I believe, in the lot of many men, is the constant existence of a domestic muddle.

And yet, practically important as I believe the subject to be, still one rather shrinks from the formal discussion of it. It is not a dignified matter to write about. The name is naturally suggestive of a sour old maid, a precise old bachelor, a vinegar-faced schoolmistress, or at best a plump and bustling house-maid. To some minds the name is redolent of worry, fault-finding, and bother. Every one can see that it is a fine thing to discuss the

laws and order of great things, — such as comets, planets, empires, and great cities ; things, in short, with which we have very little to do. And why should law and order appear contemptible just where they touch ourselves ? Is it as the ocean, clear and clean in its distant depths, grows foul and turbid just where it touches the shore ? That which we call law and order when affecting things far away, becomes tidiness where it reaches us. Yet it is not a dignified topic for an essay.

This is a beautiful morning. It is the morning of one of the last days of September, but the trees, with the exception of some of the sycamores and limes, are as green and thick-leaved as ever. The dew lies thick upon the grass, and the bright morning sun turns it to glancing gems. The threads of gossamer among the evergreen leaves look like necklaces for Titania. The crisp air, just touched with frostiness, is exhilarating. The dahlias and hollyhocks are bright, but the frost will soon make an end of the former. The swept harvest-fields look trim, and the outline of the distant hills shows sharp against the blue sky. Taking advantage of the moisture on the grass, the gardener is busy mowing it. Curious, that though it sets people's teeth on edge to listen to the sharpening of edge-tools in general, yet there is something that is extremely pleasing in the whetting of a scythe. It had better be a little way off. But it is suggestive of fresh, pleasant things ; of dewy grass and bracing morning air ; of clumps of trees standing still in the early mistiness ; of 'milkmaids singing blythe.' Let us thank Milton for the last association : we did not get it from daily life. I never heard a milkmaid singing ; in this part of the country I don't think they do sing ; and I believe cows are invariably milked within doors. But

now, how pleasant the trim look of that newly-mown lawn, so carefully swept and rolled ; there is not a dandelion in it at all, — no weed whatsoever. There are indeed abundant daisies, for though I am assured that daisies in a lawn are weeds, I never shall recognise them as such. To me they shall always be flowers, and welcome everywhere. Look too, at the well-defined outline of the grass against the gravel. I feel the joy of tidiness, and I gladly write in its praise.

Looking at this grass and gravel, I think of Mr. Tennyson. I remember a little poem of his which contains some description of his home. There, he tells us, the sunset falls

All round a careless-ordered garden,
Close by the ridge of a noble down.

I lament a defect in that illustrious man. Great is my reverence for the author of *Maud* ; great for the author of *Locksley Hall* and the *May Queen* ; greatest of all for the author of *In Memoriam* : but is it possible that the Laureate should be able to elaborate his verses to that last and most exquisite perfection, while thinking of weedy walks outside his windows, of unpruned shrubs, and fruit-trees fallen from the walls ? Must the thought be admitted to the mind, that Mr. Tennyson is not tidy ? I know not. I never saw his garden. Rather let me believe that these lines only show how tidy he is. Perhaps this garden would appear in perfect order to the visitor perhaps it seems ' careless-ordered ' only to his own sharp eye. Perhaps he discerns a weed here and there ; a blank of an inch length in a boxwood edging. Perhaps like lesser men, he cannot get his servants to be as tidy as himself. No doubt such is the state of matters.

There are, indeed, many degrees in the scale of tidiness. It is a disposition that grows upon one, and sometimes becomes almost a bondage. Some great musical composer said, shortly before he died, that he was only then beginning to get an insight into the capabilities of his art; and I dare say a similar idea has occasionally occurred to most persons endowed with a very keen sense of order. In matters external, tidiness may go to the length of what we read of Broek, that Dutch paradise of scrubbing-brushes and new paint; in matters metaphysical, it may go the length of what John Foster tells us of himself, when his fastidious sense of the exact sequence of every shade of thought compelled him to make some thousands of corrections and improvements in revising a dozen printed pages of his own composition. Tidiness is in some measure a matter of natural temperament; there are human beings who never could by possibility sit down contentedly, as some can, in a chamber where everything is topsy-turvy, and who never could by possibility have their affairs, their accounts, their books and papers, in that inextricable confusion in which some people are quite satisfied to have theirs. There may, indeed, be such a thing as that a man shall be keenly alive to the presenee or absence of order in his belongings, but at the same time so nerveless and washy that he cannot bestir himself and set things to rights; but as a general rule, the man who enjoys order and exactness will take care to have them about him. There are people who never go into a room but they see at a glance if any of its appointments are awry; and the impression is precisely that which a discordant note leaves on a musical ear. A friend of mine, not an ecclesiastical architect, never enters any church without de-

vising various alterations in it. The same person, when he enters his library in the morning, cannot be easy until he has surveyed it minutely, and seen that everything is right to a hair's breadth. Taught by long experience, the servants have done their part, and all appears perfect already to the casual observer. Not so to his eye. The hearth-rug needs a touch of the foot: the library-table becomes a marvel of collocation. Inkstands, pen-trays, letter-weighers, pamphlets, books, are marshalled more accurately than Frederick the Great's grenadiers. A chair out of its place, a corner of a crumb-cloth turned up, and my friend could no more get on with his task of composition than he could fly. I can hardly understand how Dr. Johnson was able to write the *Rambler* and to balance the periods of his sonorous prose while his books were lying upstairs dog's-eared, battered, covered with dust, strewed in heaps on the floor. But I do not wonder that Sydney Smith could go through so much and so varied work, and do it all cheerfully, when I read how he thought it no unworthy employment of the intellect which slashed respectable humbug in the *Edinburgh Review*, to arrange that wonderful store-room in his rectory at Foston, where every article of domestic consumption was allotted its place by the genial, clear-headed, active-minded man: where was the lemon-bag, where was the soap of different prices (the cheapest placed in the wrappings marked with the dearest price): where were salt, pickles, hams, butter, cheese, onions, and medicines of every degree, from the 'gentle jog' of ordinary life to the fearfully-named preparations reserved for extremity. Of course it was only because the kind reviewer's wife was a confirmed invalid that it became a man's duty to intermeddle with such womanly household cares: let

masculine tidiness find its sphere out of doors, and feminine within. It is curious how some men, of whom we should not have expected it, had a strong tendency to a certain orderliness. Byron, for example, led a very irregular life, morally speaking; yet there was a curious tidiness about it too. He liked to spend certain hours of the forenoon daily in writing; then, always at the same hour, his horses came to the door; he rode along the same road to the same spot; there he daily fired his pistols, turned, and rode home again. He liked to fall into a kind of mill-horse round: there was an imperfectly developed tidiness about the man. And even Johnson himself, though he used to kick his books savagely about, and had his study floor littered with fragments of manuscript, showed hopeful symptom of what he might have been made, when he daily walked up Bolt-court, carefully placing his feet upon the self-same stones, in the self-same order.

Great men, to be sure, may do what they please, and if they choose to dress like beggars and to have their houses as frowsy as themselves, why, we must excuse it for the sake of all that we owe them. But Wesley was philosophically right when he insisted on the necessity, for ordinary men, of neatness and tidiness in dress; and we cannot help making a moral estimate of people from what we see of their conformity to the great law of rightness in little things. I cannot tolerate a harum-scarum fellow who never knows where to find anything he wants, whose boots and handkerchiefs and gloves are everywhere but where they are needed. And who would marry a slatternly girl, whose dress is frayed at the edges and whose fingers are through her gloves? The Latin poet wrote *Nulla fronti fides*; but I have consider-

able faith in a front-door. If when I go to the house of a man of moderate means I find the steps scrupulously clean, and the brass about the door shining like gold; and if, when the door is opened by a perfectly neat servant (I don't suppose a footman), I find the hall trim as it should be, the oilcloth shiny without being slippery, the stair-carpet laid straight as an arrow, the brass rods which hold it gleaming, I cannot but think that things are going well in that house; that it is the home of cheerfulness, hopefulness, and reasonable prosperity; that the people in it speak truth and hate whiggery. Especially I respect the mistress of that house; and conclude that she is doing her duty in that station in life to which it has pleased God to call her.

But if tidiness be thus important everywhere, what must it be in the dwellings of the poor? In these, so far as my experience has gone, tidiness and morality are always in direct proportion. You can see at once, when you enter a poor man's cottage (always with your hat off, my friend), how his circumstances are, and generally how his character is. If the world is going against him; if hard work and constant pinching will hardly get food and clothing for the children, you see the fact in the untidy house: the poor mistress of it has no heart for that constant effort which is needful in the cottage to keep things right; she has no heart for the constant stitching which is needful to keep the poor little children's clothes on their backs. Many a time it has made my heart sore to see, in the relaxation of wonted tidiness, the first indication that things are going amiss, that hope is dying, that the poor struggling pair are feeling that their heads are getting under water at last. Ah, there is often a sad significance in the hearth no longer

so elcanly swept, in the handle wanting from the ehest of drawers, in little Jamie's torn jacket, which a few stithes would mend, but which I remember torn for these ten days past ! And remember, my reader, that to keep a poor man's eottage tidy, his wife must always have spirit and heart to work. If *you* ehoose, when you feel unstrung by some depression, to sit all day by the fire, the house will be kept tidy by the servants without your interference. And indeed the inmates of a house of the better sort are putting things out of order from morning till night, and would leave the house in a sad mess if the servants were not constantly following in their wake and setting things to rights again. But if the labourer's wife, anxious and weak and sick at heart as she may rise from her poor bed, do not yet wash and dress the little ehildren, they will not be either washed or dressed at all ; if she do not kindle her fire, there will be no fire at all ; if she do not prepare her husband's breakfast, he must go out to his hard work without any ; if she do not make the beds and dust the ehairs and tables and wash the linen, and do a host of other things, they will not be done at all. And then in the forenoon Mrs. Bounceer, the retired manufacturer's wife (Mr. Bounceer has just bought the estate), enters the eottage with an air of extreme eondescension and patronage, and if everything about the cottage be not in tidy order, Mrs. Bounceer rebukes the poor down-hearted creature for laziness and neglect. I should like to ehoke Mrs. Bounceer for her heartless insolence. I think some of the hatefulest phases of human nature are exhibited in the visits paid by newly rich folk to the dwellings of the poor. You, Mrs. Bounceer, and people like you, have no more right to enter a poor man's house and insult his wife than that

poor man has to enter your drawing-room and give you a piece of his mind upon matters in general and yourself in particular. We hear much now-a-days about the distinctive characteristics of ladies and gentlemen, as contrasted with those of people who are well-dressed and live in fine houses, but whom no house and no dress will ever make gentlemen and ladies. It seems to me that the very first and finest characteristic of all who are justly entitled to these names of honour, is a most delicate, scrupulous, chivalrous consideration for the feelings of the poor. Without *that* the cottage visitor will do no good to the cottager. If you, my lady friend, who are accustomed to visit the dwellings of the poor in your neighbourhood, convey by your entire demeanour the impression that you are, socially and intellectually, coming a great way down-stairs in order to make yourself agreeable and intelligible to the people you find there, you had better have stayed at home. You will irritate, you will rasp, you will embitter, you will excite a disposition to let fly at your head. You may sometimes gratify your vanity and folly by meeting with a servile and crawling adulation, but it is a hypocritical adulation that grovels in your presence and shakes the fist at you after the door has closed on your retreating steps. Don't fancy I am exaggerating: I describe nothing which I have not myself seen and known.

I like to think of the effect which tidiness has in equalizing the real content of the rich and poor. If even you, my reader, find it pleasant to go into the humblest little dwelling where perfect neatness reigns, think what pleasure the inmates (perhaps the solitary inmate) of that dwelling must have in daily maintaining that speckless tidiness, and living in the midst of it.

There is to me a perfect charm about a sanded floor, and about deal furniture scrubbed into the perfection of cleanliness. How nice the table and the chairs look; how inviting that solitary big arm-chair by the little fire! The fireplace indeed consists of two blocks of stone washed over with pipeclay, and connected by half a dozen bars of iron; but no register grate of polished steel ever pleased me better. God has made us so that there is a racy enjoyment, a delightful smack, about extreme simplicity co-existing with extreme tidiness. I don't mean to say that I should prefer that sanded floor and those chairs of deal to a Turkey carpet and carved oak or walnut; but I assert that there is a certain indefinable relish about the simpler furniture which the grander wants. In a handsome apartment you don't think of looking at the upholstery in detail; you remark whether the general effect be good or bad; but in the little cottage you look with separate enjoyment on each separate simple contrivance. Do you think that a rich man, sitting in his sumptuous library, all oak and morocco, glittering backs of splendid volumes, lounges and sofas of every degree, which he merely paid for, has half the enjoyment that Robinson Crusoe had when he looked round his cave with its rude shelves and bulkheads, its clumsy arm-chair and its rough pottery, all contrived and made by his own hands? Now the poor cottager has a good deal of the Robinson Crusoe enjoyment; something of the pleasure which Sandford and Merton felt when they had built and thatched their house and then sat within it, gravely proud and happy, whilst the pelting shower came down but could not reach them. When a man gets the length of considering the architectural character of his house, the imposing effect

which the great entrance-hall will have upon visitors, the vista of drawing-room retiring within drawing-room, he loses the relish which accompanies the original idea of a house as a something which is to keep us snug and warm from wind and rain and cold. So if you gain something by having a grand house, you lose something too, and something which is the more constantly and sensibly felt — you lose the joy of simple tidiness; and your life grows so artificial, that many days you never think of your dwelling at all, nor remember what it looks like.

I have not space to say anything of the importance of tidiness in the poor man's dwelling in a sanitary point of view. Untidiness *there* is the direct cause of disease and death. And it is the thing, too, which drives the husband and father to the ale-house. All this has been so often said, that it is needless to repeat it; but there is another thing which is not so generally understood, and which deserves to be mentioned. Let me then say to all landed proprietors, it depends very much upon you whether the poor man's home shall be tidy or not. Give a poor man a decent cottage, and he has some heart to keep tidiness about the door, and his wife has some heart to maintain tidiness within. Many of the dwellings which the rich provide for the poor are such that the poor inmates must just sit down in despair, feeling that it is vain to try to be tidy, either without doors or within. If the cottage floor is of clay, which becomes a damp puddle in rainy weather; if the roof be of very old thatch, full of insects, and open to the apartment below; if you go *down* one or two steps below the level of the surrounding earth when you enter the house; if there be no proper chimney, but merely a

hole in the roof, to which the smoke seems not to find its way till it has visited every other nook ; if swarms of parasitic vermin have established themselves beyond expulsion through fifty years of neglect and filth ; if a dung-heap be by ancient usage established under the window ; * then how can a poor overwrought man or woman (and energy and activity die out in the atmosphere of constant anxiety and care) find spirit to try to tidy a place like that ? They do not know where to begin the hopeless task. A little encouragement will do wonders to develop a spirit of tidiness. The love of order and neatness, and the capacity of enjoying order and neatness, are latent in all human hearts. A man who has lived for a dozen years in a filthy hovel, without once making a resolute endeavour to amend it, will, when you put him down in a neat pretty cottage, astonish you by the spirit of tidiness he will exhibit, and his wife will astonish you as much. They feel that now there is some use in trying. There was none before. The good that is in most of us needs to be encouraged and fostered. In few human beings is tidiness, or any other virtue, so energetic that it will force its way in spite of extreme opposition. Anything good usually sets out with timid, weakly beginnings ; and it may easily be crushed then. And the love of tidiness is crushed in many a poor man and woman by the kind of dwelling in which they are placed by their landlords. Let us thank God that better times are beginning ; but times are still

* The writer describes nothing which he has not seen a hundred times. He has seen a cottage, the approach to which was a narrow passage, about two feet in breadth, cut through a large dung-heap which rose more than a yard on either side of the narrow passage and which was piled up to a fathom's height against the cottage wall. This was *not* in Ireland.

bad enough. I don't envy the man, commoner or peer, whom I see in his carriage-and-four, when I think how a score or two families of his fellow-creatures upon his property are living in places where he would not put his horses or his dogs. I am conservatively enough inclined; but I sometimes think I could join in a Chartist rising.

Experience has shown that healthy, cheerful, airy cottages for the poor, in which something like decency is possible, entail no pecuniary loss upon the philanthropic proprietor who builds them. But even if they did, it is his bounden duty to provide such dwellings. If he do not, he is disloyal to his country, an enemy to his race, a traitor to the God who entrusted him with so much. And surely, in the judgment of all whose opinion is worth a rush, it is a finer thing to have the cottages on a man's estate places fit for human habitation, — with the climbing-roses covering them, the little gravel-walk to the door, the little potato-plot cultivated at after-hours, with windows that can open and doors that can shut; with little children not pallid and lean, but plump and rosy (and fresh air has as much to do with that as abundant food has), — surely, I say, it is better a thousand times to have one's estate dotted with scenes such as *that*, than to have a dozen more paintings on one's walls, or a score of additional horses in one's stables.

And now, having said so much in praise of tidiness, let me conclude by remarking that it is possible to carry even this virtue to excess. It is foolish to keep houses merely to be cleaned, as some Dutch housewives are said to do. Nor is it fit to clip the graceful forms of Nature into unnatural trimness and formality, as Dutch

gardeners do. Among ourselves, however, I am not aware that there exists any tendency to either error: so it is needless to argue against either. The perfection of Dutch tidiness is to be found, I have said, at Broek, a few miles from Amsterdam. Here is some account of it from Washington Irving's ever-pleasing pen:—

What renders Broek so perfect an Elysium in the eyes of all true Hollanders, is the matchless height to which the spirit of cleanliness is carried there. It amounts almost to a religion among the inhabitants, who pass the greater part of their time rubbing and scrubbing, and painting and varnishing: each housewife vies with her neighbour in devotion to the scrubbing-brush, as zealous Catholics do in their devotion to the Cross.

I alighted outside the village, for no horse or vehicle is permitted to enter its precincts, lest it should cause defilement of the well-scoured pavements. Shaking the dust off my feet, then, I prepared to enter, with due reverence and circumspection, this *sanctum sanctorum* of Dutch cleanliness. I entered by a narrow street, paved with yellow bricks, laid edgewise, and so clean that one might eat from them. Indeed, they were actually worn deep, not by the tread of feet, but by the friction of the scrubbing-brush.

The houses were built of wood, and all appeared to have been freshly painted, of green, yellow, and other bright colours. They were separated from each other by gardens and orchards, and stood at some little distance from the street, with wide areas or courtyards, paved in mosaic with variegated stones, polished by frequent rubbing. The areas were divided from the streets by curiously wrought railings or balustrades of iron, surmounted with brass and copper balls, scoured into dazzling effulgence. The very trunks of the trees in front of the houses were by the same process made to look as if they had been varnished. The porches, doors, and window-frames of the houses were of exotic woods, curiously carved, and polished like costly furniture. The front doors are never opened, except on christenings, marriages, and funerals; on all ordinary occasions, visitors enter by the back-doors. In former times, persons when admitted had to put on slippers, but this Oriental ceremony is no longer insisted on.

We are assured by the same authority, that such is the love of tidiness which prevails at Broek, that the

good people there can imagine no greater felicity than to be ever surrounded by the very perfection of it. And it seems that the *prediger*, or preacher of the place, accommodates his doctrine to the views of his hearers ; and in his weekly discourses, when he would describe that Happy Place where, as I trust, my readers and I will one day meet the quiet burghers of Broek, he strongly insists that it is the very tidiest place in the universe : a place where all things (I trust he says *within* as well as *around*), are spotlessly pure and clean ; and where all disorder, confusion, and dirt are done with for ever !



CHAPTER VII.

HOW I MUSED IN THE RAILWAY TRAIN:

BEING THOUGHTS ON RISING BY CANDLELIGHT; ON
NERVOUS FEARS; AND ON VAPOURING.

NOT entirely awake, I am standing on the platform of a large railway terminus in a certain great city, at 7.20 A.M., on a foggy morning early in January. I am about to set out on a journey of a hundred miles by the 7.30 train, which is a slow one, stopping at all the stations. I am alone; for more than human would that friendship be which would bring out mortal man to see one off at such an hour in winter. It is a dreamy sort of scene; I can hardly feel that it substantially exists. Who has not sometimes, on a still autumn afternoon, suddenly stopped on a path winding through sere, motionless woods, and felt within himself, Now, I can hardly believe in all this? You talk of the difficulty of realizing the unseen and spiritual: is it not sometimes, in certain mental moods, and in certain aspects of external nature, quite as difficult to feel the substantial existence of things which we can see and touch? Extreme stillness and loneliness, perhaps, are the usual conditions of this peculiar feeling. Sometimes most men have thought to themselves that it would be well for them if they could but have the evidence of sense to assure them of certain great realities

which while we live in this world we never can touch or see ; but I think that many readers will agree with me when I say, that very often the evidence of sense comes no nearer to producing the solid conviction of reality than does that widely different evidence on which we believe the existence of all that is not material. You have climbed, alone, on an autumn day, to the top of a great hill ; a river runs at its base unheard ; a champaign country spreads beyond the river ; cornfields swept and bare ; hedge-rows dusky green against the yellow ground ; a little farmhouse here and there, over which the smoke stagnates in the breezeless air. It is heather that you are standing on. And as you stand there alone, and look away over that scene, you have felt as though sense, and the convictions of sense, were partially paralysed : you have been aware that you could not *feel* that the landscape before you was solid reality. I am not talking to blockheads, who never thought or felt anything particularly ; of course *they* could not understand my meaning. But as for you, thoughtful reader, have you not sometimes, in such a scene, thought to yourself, not without a certain startled pleasure, — Now, I realize it no more substantially that there spreads a landscape beyond that river, than that there spreads a country beyond the grave !

There are many curious moods of mind, of which you will find no mention in books of metaphysics. The writers of works of mental philosophy keep by the bread and butter of the world of mind. And every one who knows by personal experience how great a part of the actual phases of thought and feeling lies beyond the reach of logical explanation, and can hardly be fixed and represented by any words, will rejoice when he meets

with any account of intellectual moods which he himself has often known, but which are not to be classified or explained. And people are shy about talking of such things. I felt indebted to a friend, a man of high talent and cultivation, whom I met on the street of a large city on a snowy winter day. The streets were covered with unmelted snow; so were the housetops; how black and dirty the walls looked, contrasting with the snow. Great flakes were falling thickly, and making a curtain which at a few yards' distance shut out all objects more effectually than the thickest fog. 'It is a day,' said my friend, 'I don't believe in;' and then he went away. And I know he would not believe in the day, and he would not feel that he was in a world of reality, till he had escaped from the eerie scene out of doors, and sat down by his library fire. But has not the mood found a more beautiful description in Coleridge's tragedy of *Remorse*? Opium, no doubt, may have increased such phases of mind in his case; but they are well known by numbers who never tasted opium: —

On a rude rock,
A rock, methought, fast by a grove of firs,
Whose thready leaves to the low-breathing gale,
Made a soft sound most like the distant ocean,
I staid, as though the hour of death were passed,
And I were sitting in the world of spirits —
For all things seemed unreal.

And there can be no doubt that the long vaulted vistas through a pine wood, the motionless trunks, dark and ghostly, and the surgy swell of the wind through the spines, are conditions very likely to bring on, if you are alone, this particular mental state.

But to return to the railway station which suggested

all this ; it is a dreamy scene, and I look at it with sleepy eyes. There are not many people going by the train, though it is a long one. Daylight is an hour or more distant yet ; and the directors, either with the design of producing picturesque lights and shadows in their shed, or with the design of economizing gas, have resorted to the expedient of lighting only every second lamp. There are no lamps, too, in the carriages ; and the blank abysses seen through the open doors remind one of the cells in some feudal dungeon. A little child would assuredly howl if it were brought to this place this morning. Away in the gloom, at the end of the train, the sombre engine that is to take us is hissing furiously, and throwing a lurid glare upon the ground underneath it. Nobody's wits have fully arrived. The clerk who gave me my ticket was yawning tremendously ; the porters on the platform are yawning ; the guard, who is standing two yards off, looking very neat and trimly dressed through the gloom, is yawning ; the stoker who was shovelling coke into the engine fire was yawning awfully as he did so. We are away through the fog, through the mist, over the black country which is slowly turning grey in the morning twilight. I have with me various newspapers ; but for an hour and more it will be impossible to see to read them. Two fellow-travellers, whose forms I dimly trace, I hear expressing indignation that the railway company give no lamps in the carriages. I lean back and try to think.

It is most depressing and miserable work, getting up by candlelight. It is impossible to shave comfortably ; it is impossible to have a satisfactory bath ; it is impossible to find anything you want. Sleep, says Sancho Panza, covers a man all over like a mantle of comfort ;

but rising before daylight envelops the entire being in petty misery. An indescribable vacuity makes itself felt in the epigastric regions, and a leaden heaviness weighs upon heart and spirits. It must be a considerable item in the hard lot of domestic servants, to have to get up through all the winter months in the cold dark house: let us be thankful to them through whose humble labours and self-denial we find the cheerful fire blazing in the tidy breakfast parlour when we find our way down-stairs. That same apartment looked cheerless enough when the housemaid entered it two hours ago. It is sad when you are lying in bed of a morning, lazily conscious of that circling amplitude of comfort, to hear the chilly cry of the poor sweep outside; or the tread of the factory hands shivering by in their thin garments towards the great cotton mill, glaring spectral out of its many windows, but at least with a cosy suggestion of warmth and light. Think of the baker, too, who rose in the dark of midnight that those hot rolls might appear on your breakfast table; and of the printer, intelligent, active, accurate to a degree that you careless folk who put no points in your letters have little idea of, whose labours have given you that damp sheet which in a little will feel so crisp and firm after it has been duly dried, and which will tell you all that is going on over all the world, down to the opera which closed at twelve, and the Parliamentary debate which was not over till half-past four. It is good occasionally to rise at five on a December morning, that you may feel how much you are indebted to some who do so for your sake all the winter through. No doubt they get accustomed to it: but so may you by doing it always. A great many people, living easy lives, have no idea of the discomfort of rising by candlelight. Prob-

ably they hardly ever did it: when they did it, they had a blazing fire and abundant light to dress by; and even with these advantages, which essentially change the nature of the enterprise, they have not done it for very long. What an aggregate of misery is the result of that inveterate usage in the University of Glasgow, that the early lectures begin at 7.30 A. M. from November till May! How utterly miserable the dark, dirty streets look, as the unhappy student splashes through mud and smoke to the black archway that admits to those groves of Academe! And what a blear-eyed, unwashed, unshaven, blinking, ill-natured, wretched set it is that fills the benches of the lecture-room! The design of the authorities in maintaining that early hour has been much misunderstood. Philosophers have taught that the professors, in bringing out their unhappy students at that period, had it in view to turn to use an hour of the day which otherwise would have been wasted in bed, and thus set free an hour at a better season of the day. Another school of metaphysicians, among whom may be reckoned the eminent authors, Brown, Jones, and Robinson, have maintained with considerable force of argument that the authorities of the University, eager to advance those under their charge in health, wealth, and wisdom, have resorted to an observance which has for many ages been regarded as conducive to that end. Others, again, the most eminent among whom is Smith, have taken up the ground that the professors have fixed on the early hour for no reason in particular; but that, as the classes must meet at some hour of each day, they might just as well meet at that hour as at any other. All these theories are erroneous. There is more in the system than meets the eye. It originated in Roman Catholic days;

and something of the philosophy of the stoic and of the faith of the anchorite is involved in it. Grim lessons of endurance ; dark hints of penance ; extensive disgust at matters in general, and a disposition to punch the head of humanity ; are mystically connected with the lectures at 7.30 A. M. in winter. It is quite different in summer, when everything is bright and inviting ; if you are up and forth by five or six o'clock any morning then, you feel ashamed as you look at the drawn blinds and the closed shutters of the house in the broad daylight. There is something curious in the contrast between the stillness and shut-up look of a country-house in the early summer-morning, and the blaze of light, the dew sparkling life-like on the grass, the birds singing, and all nature plainly awake though man is asleep. You feel that at 7.30 in June, Nature intends you to be astir ; but believe it, ye learned doctors of Glasgow College, at 7.30 in December, her intention is quite the reverse. And if you fly in Nature's face, and persist in getting up at unseasonable hours, she will take it out of you by making you horribly uncomfortable.

There, is, indeed, one fashion in which rising by candle-light, under the most uncomfortable circumstances, may turn to a source of positive enjoyment. And the more dreary and wretched you feel, as you wearily drag yourself out of bed into the searching cold, the greater will that peculiar enjoyment be. Have you not, my reader, learned by your own experience that the machinery of the human mind and heart may be *worked backwards*, just as a steam-engine is reversed, so that a result may be produced which is exactly the opposite of the normal one ? The fundamental principle on which the working of the human constitution, as regards pleasure and pain,

goes, may be stated in the following formula, which will not appear a truism except to those who have not brains to understand it —

THE MORE JOLLY YOU ARE, THE JOLLIER YOU ARE.

But by reversing the poles, or by working the machine backwards, many human beings, such as Indian fakirs, mediæval monks and hermits, Simeon Stylites, very early risers, very hard students, Childe Harold, men who fall in love and then go off to Australia without telling the young woman, and the like, bring themselves to this : — that their fundamental principle, as regards pleasure and pain, takes the following form —

THE MORE MISERABLE YOU ARE, THE JOLLIER YOU ARE.

Don't you know that all *that* is true? A man may bring himself to this point, that it shall be to him a positive satisfaction to think how much he is denying himself, and how much he is taking out of himself. And all this satisfaction may be felt quite irrespective of any worthy end to be attained by all this pain, toil, endurance, self-denial. I believe indeed that the taste for suffering as a source of enjoyment is an acquired taste; it takes some time to bring any human being to it. It is not natural, in the obvious meaning of the word; but assuredly it is natural in the sense that it founds on something which is of the essence of human nature. You must penetrate through the upper stratum of the heart, so to speak — that stratum which finds enjoyment in enjoyment — and then you reach to a deeper *sensorium*, one whose sensibility is as keen, one whose sensibility is longer in getting dulled — that *sensorium* which finds enjoyment in endurance. Nor have many years to pass over as before we come to feel that this peculiar sensibility

has been in some measure developed. If you, my friend, are now a man, it is probable (alas ! not certain) that you were once a boy. Perhaps you were a clever boy ; perhaps you were at the head of your class ; perhaps you were a hardworking boy. And now tell me, when on a fine summer evening you heard the shouts and merriment of your companions in the playground, while you were toiling away with your lexicon and your Livy, or turning a passage from Shakspeare into Greek iambs (a hardly-acquired accomplishment, which has proved so useful in after life), did you not feel a certain satisfaction — it was rather a sad one, but still a satisfaction — as you thought how pleasant it would be to be out in the beautiful sunshine, and yet felt resolved that out you would not go ? Well for you if your father and mother set themselves stoutly against this dangerous feeling ; well for you if you never overheard them relating with pride to their acquaintances what a laborious, self-denying, wonderful boy thou wast ! For the sad satisfaction which has been described is the self-same feeling which makes the poor Hindoo swing himself on a large hook stuck through his skin, and the fakir pleased when he finds that his arm, stretched out for twenty years, cannot now be drawn back. It is precisely the feeling which led the saints of the middle ages to starve themselves till their palate grew insensible to the taste of food, or to flagellate themselves as badly as Legree did Uncle Tom, or to refrain wholly from the use of soap and water for forty years. It is a most dangerous thing to indulge in, this enjoyment arising from the principle of the greatest jollity from the greatest suffering ; for although we ought to feel thankful that God has so ordered things, that in a world where little that is good can be done except by painful exertion and resolute self-de-

nial, a certain satisfaction is linked even with that exertion and self-denial in themselves, apart from the good results to which they lead ; it seems to me that we have no right to add needless bitterness to life that our morbid spirit may draw from it a morbid enjoyment. No doubt self-denial, and struggle against our nature for the right, is a noble thing : but I think that in the present day there is a tendency unduly to exalt both work and self-denial, as though these things were excellent in themselves apart from any excellent ends which follow from them. Work merely as work is not a good thing : it is a good thing because of the excellent things that come with it and of it. And so with self-denial, whether it appear in swinging on a hook or in rising at five on a winter morning. It is a noble thing if it is to do some good ; but very many people appear to think it a noble thing in itself, though it do no good whatever. The man deserves canonization who swings on a hook to save his country ; but the man is affected with a morbid reversal of the constitution of human nature who swings on a hook because he finds a strange satisfaction in doing something which is terribly painful and abhorrent. The true nobility of labour and self-denial is reflected back on them from a noble end : there is nothing fine in accumulating suffering upon ourselves merely because we hate it, but feel a certain secondary pleasure in resolutely submitting to what primarily we hate. There is nothing fine in going into a monastery merely because you would much rather stay out. There is nothing fine in going off to America, and never asking a woman to be your wife, merely because you are very fond of her, and know that all this will be a fearful trial to go through. You will be in truth ridiculous, though you may fancy yourself sub-

line, when you are sitting at the door of your log hut away in backwoods lonely as those loved by Daniel Boone, and sadly priding yourself on the terrible sacrifice you have made. That sacrifice would have been grand if it had been your solemn duty to make it; it is silly, and it is selfish, if it be made for mere self-denial's sake.

Now a great many people do not remember this. David Copperfield was pleased in thinking that he was taking so much out of himself. He was pleased in thinking so, even though no earthly good came of his doing all that. His kind aunt was ruined, and he was determined that he would deny himself in every way that he might not be a burden upon her; and so when he was walking to any place he walked at a furious pace, and was glad to find himself growing fagged and out of breath, because surely it must be a good thing to feel so jaded and miserable. It was self-sacrifice; it was self-denial. And if to walk at five miles and a half an hour had had any tendency to restore his aunt's little fortune, it could not have been praised too much; and the less David liked it, the more praise it would have deserved. And I venture to think that a good deal of the present talk about muscular Christianity is based upon this error. I do not know that exertion of the muscles, as such, is necessarily a good or an essentially Christian thing. It is good because it promotes health of body and of mind; but you find many books which appear to teach that it is a fine thing in itself to leap a horse over a five-barred gate, or to crumple up a silver jug, or to thrash a prize-fighter. It is very well to thrash the prize-fighter if it becomes necessary, but surely it would be better to escape the necessity of thrashing the prize-fighter. Certain of the poems of Longfellow, much admired and quoted

by young ladies, are instinct with the mischievous notion that self-denial for mere self-denial's sake is a grand, heroic, and religious thing. The *Psalm of Life* is extremely vague, and somewhat unintelligible. It is philosophically false to say that

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way.

For, rightly understood, happiness not only *is* our aim, but is plainly intended to be such by our Creator. He made us to be happy: the whole bearing of revealed religion is to make us happy. Of course, the man who grasps at selfish enjoyment turns his back on happiness. Self-sacrifice and exertion, where needful, are the way to happiness; and the main thing which we know of the Christian Heaven is, that it is a state of happiness. But Longfellow, talking in that fashion (no doubt sitting in a large easy chair by a warm fire in a snug study when he did so), wants to convey the utterly false notion, that there is something fine in doing what is disagreeable, merely for the sake of doing it. Now, that notion is Bhuddism, but it is not Christianity. Christianity says to us, Suffer, labour, endure up to martyrdom, when duty calls you; but never fancy that there is anything noble in throwing yourself in martyrdom's way. 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' And as for Longfellow's conception of the fellow who went up the Alps, bellowing out *Excelsior*, it is nothing better than childish. Any one whose mind is matured enough to discern that Child Harold was a humbug, will see that the lad was a fool. What on earth was he to do when he got to the top of the Alps? The poet does not even pretend to answer that question. He never pretends that the lad whose

brow was sad, and his eye like a faulchion, &c., had anything useful or excellent to accomplish when he reached the mountain-top at last. Longfellow wishes us to understand that it was a noble thing to push onward and upward through the snow, merely because it is a very difficult and dangerous thing. He wishes us to understand that it was a noble thing to turn away from warm household fires to spectral glaciers, and to resist the invitations of the maiden, who, if the lad was a stranger in those parts, as seems to be implied, must have been a remarkably free and easy style of young lady — merely because average human nature would have liked extremely to get out of the storm to the bright fireside, and to have had a quiet chat with the maiden. I don't mean to say that about ten years ago I did not think that *Excelsior* was a wonderful poem, setting out a true and noble principle. A young person is captivated with the notion of self-sacrifice, with or without a reason for it; but self-sacrifice, uncalled for and useless, is stark folly. It was very good of Curtius to jump into the large hole in the Forum; no doubt he saved the Senate great expense in filling it up, though probably it would have been easier to do so than to carry the Liverpool and Manchester Railway through Chatmoss. And we cannot think, even yet, of Leonidas and his three hundred at Thermopylæ, without some stir of heart; but would not the gallant Lacedæmonians have been silly and not heroic, had not their self-sacrifice served a great end, by gaining for their countrymen certain precious days? Even Dickens, though not much of a philosopher, is more philosophic than Longfellow. He wrote a little book one Christmas time, *The Battle of Life*, whose plot turns entirely upon an extraordinary act of self-sacrifice; and

which contains many sentences which sound like the cant of the day. Witness the following:—

It is a world on which the sun never rises, but it looks upon a thousand bloodless battles, that are some set-off against the miseries and wickedness of battle-fields.

There are victories gained every day, in struggling hearts, to which these fields of battle are as nothing.

But although the book contains such sentences, which seem to teach that struggle and self-conquest are noble in themselves, apart from their aim or their necessity, the lesson taught by the entire story is the true and just one, that there is no nobler thing than self-sacrifice and self-conquest, when they are right, when they are needful, when a noble end is to be gained by them. As some dramatist or other says —

That's truly great! What think ye, 'twas set up
The Greek and Roman names in such a lustre,
But doing right, in stern despite of nature!
Shutting their ears 'gainst all her little cries,
When great, august, and godlike virtue called!

The author, you see, very justly remarks that you are not called to fly in the face of danger, unless when there is good reason for it. And therefore, my friend, don't get up at seven o'clock on a winter morning, if you can possibly help it. If virtue calls, it will indeed be noble to rise by candlelight; but not otherwise. If you are the engine-driver of an early train, if you are a factory-hand, if you are a Glasgow student of philosophy, get up at an unseasonable period, and accept the writer's sympathy and admiration. Poor fellow, you cannot help it! But if you are a Glasgow professor, I have no veneration for that needless act of self-denial. *You* need not get up so early unless you like. *You* do the thing of your free

choice. And *your* heroisin is only that of the Brahmin who swings on the hook, when nobody asks him to do so.

Having mused in this fashion, I look out of the carriage window. The morning is breaking, cold and dismal. There is a thick white mist. We are flying on, across gray fields, by spectral houses and trees, showing indistinct through the uncertain light. It is light enough to read, by making an effort. I draw from my pocket a letter, which came late last night: it is from a friend, who is an eminent Editor. I do not choose to remember the name of the periodical which he conducts. I have had time to do no more than glance over it; and I have not yet arrived at its full meaning. I feel as Tony Lumpkin felt, who never had the least difficulty in reading the outside of his letters, but who found it very hard work to decipher the inside. The circumstance was the more annoying, he justly observed, inasmuch as the inside of a letter generally contains the cream of the correspondence.

When I receive a letter from my friend the Editor, I am able, by an intense application of attention for a few minutes, to make out its general drift and meaning. The difficulty in the way of grasping the entire sense does not arise from any obscurity of style, but wholly from the remarkable nature of the penmanship. And after gaining the general bearing of the document, I am well aware that there are many recesses and nooks of meaning which will not be reached but after repeated perusals. What appeared at first a flourish of the pen may gradually assume the form of an important clause of a sentence, materially modifying its force. What appears at present a blot may turn out to be anything whatever; what at present looks like No may prove to have stood for Yes.

I think sympathetically of the worthy father of Dr. Chalmers. When he received his weekly or fortnightly letter from his distinguished son, he carefully locked it up. By the time a little store had accumulated, his son came to pay him a visit; and then he broke all the seals, and got the writer of the letters to read them. I read my letter over; several shades of thought break upon me, of whose existence in it I was previously unaware. That handwriting is like *In Memoriam*. Read it for the twentieth time, and you will find something new in it. I fold the letter up; and I begin to think of a matter concerning which I have thought a good deal of late.

Surely, I think to myself, there is a respect in which the more refined and cultivated portion of the human race in Britain is suffering a rapid deterioration, and getting into a morbid state. I mean in the matter of nervous irritability or excitability. Surely people are far more *nervous* now than they used to be some generations back. The mental cultivation and the mental wear which we have to go through, tends to make that strange and inexplicable portion of our physical constitution a very great deal too sensitive for the work and trial of daily life. A few days ago I drove a friend who had been paying us a visit over to our railway-station. He is a man of fifty, a remarkably able and accomplished man. Before the train started the guard came round to look at the tickets. My friend could not find his; he searched his pockets everywhere, and although the entire evil consequence, had the ticket not turned up, could not possibly have been more than the payment a second time of four or five shillings, he got into a nervous tremor painful to see. He shook from head to foot; his hand trembled so that he could not prosecute his search rightly, and finally he

found the missing ticket in a pocket which he had already searched half a dozen times. Now contrast the condition of this highly-civilized man, thrown into a painful flurry and confusion at the demand of a railway ticket, with the impassive coolness of a savage, who would not move a muscle if you hacked him in pieces. Is it not a dear price we pay for our superior cultivation, this morbid sensitiveness which makes us so keenly alive to influences which are painful and distressing? I have known very highly educated people who were positively trembling with anxiety and undefined fear every day before the post came in. Yet they had no reason to anticipate bad news; they could conjure up indeed a hundred gloomy forebodings of evil, but no one knew better than themselves how vain and weak were their fears. Surely the knights of old must have been quite different. They had great stalwart bodies, and no minds to speak of. They had no doubt a high sense of honour — not a very enlightened sense — but their purely intellectual nature was hardly developed at all. They never read anything. There were not many knights or squires like Fitz Eustace, who

Much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton or De Worde.

They never speculated upon any abstract subject: and although in their long rides from place to place they might have had time for thinking, I suppose their attention was engrossed by the necessity of having a sharp look-out around them for the appearance of a foe. And we all know that *that* kind of sharpness — the hunter's

sharpness, the guerilla's sharpness — may coexist with the densest stupidity in all matters beyond the little range that is familiar. The aboriginal Australian can trace friend or foe with the keenness almost of brute instinct: so can the Red Indian, so can the Wild Bushman; yet the intellectual and moral nature in all these races is not very many degrees above the elephant or the shepherd's dog. And stupidity is a great preservative against nervous excitability or anxiety. A dull man cannot think of the thousand sad possibilities which the quicker mind sees are brooding over human life. Nor does this friendly stupidity only dull the understanding; it gives *inertia*, immobility, to the emotional nature. Compare a pure thoroughbred horse with a huge heavy cart-horse without a trace of breeding. The thoroughbred is a beautiful creature indeed: but look at the startled eye, look at the quick ears, look at the blood coursing through those great veins so close to the surface, look how tremblingly alive the creature is to any sudden sight or sound. Why, there you have got the perfection of equine nature, but you have paid for it just the same price that you pay for the perfection of human nature — what a *nervous* creature you have there! Then look at the cart-horse. It is clumsy in shape, ungraceful in movement, rough in skin, dull of eye; in short, it is a great ugly brute. But what a placid equanimity there is about it! How composed, how immovable it looks, standing with its head hanging down, and its eyes half-closed. It is a low type of its race no doubt, but it enjoys the blessing which is enjoyed by the dull, stupid, unrefined woman or man; it is not nervous. Let something fall with a whack, *it* does not start as if it had been shot. Throw a little pebble at its flank, 't turns round tranquilly to see what is the

matter. Why, the thoroughbred would have been over that hedge at much less provocation.

The morbid nervousness of the present day appears in several ways. It brings a man sometimes to that startled state that the sudden opening of a door, the elash of the falling fire-irons, or any little accident, puts him in a flutter. How nervous the late Sir Robert Peel must have been when, a few weeks before his death, he went to the Zoölogical Gardens, and when a monkey suddenly sprang upon his arm, the great and worthy man fainted! Another phase of nervousness is when a man is brought to that state that the least noise, or cross-occurrence, seems to jar through the entire nervous system — to upset him, as we say; when he cannot command his mental powers except in perfect stillness, or in the chamber and at the writing-table to which he is accustomed; when, in short, he gets fidgety, easily worried, full of whims and fancies which must be indulged and considered, or he is quite out of sorts. Another phase of the same morbid condition is, when a human being is always oppressed with vague undefined fears that things are going wrong; that his income will not meet the demands upon it, that his child's lungs are affected, that his mental powers are leaving him — a state of feeling which shades rapidly off into positive insanity. Indeed, when matters remain long in any of the fashions which have been described, I suppose the natural termination must be disease of the heart, or a shock of paralysis, or insanity in the form either of mania or idioey. Numbers of commonplace people who could feel very acutely, but who could not tell what they felt, have been worried into fatal heart-disease by prolonged anxiety and misery. Every one knows how paralysis laid its hand upon Sir

Walter Scott, always great, lastly heroic. Protracted anxiety how to make the ends meet, with a large family and an uncertain income, drove Southey's first wife into the lunatic asylum: and there is hardly a more touching story than that of her fears and forebodings through nervous year after year. Not less sad was the end of her overwrought husband, in blank vacuity; nor the like end of Thomas Moore. And perhaps the saddest instance of the result of an overdriven nervous system, in recent days, was the end of that rugged, honest, wonderful genius, Hugh Miller.

Is it a reaction, a desperate rally against something that is felt to be a powerful invader, that makes it so much a point of honour with Englishmen at this day to retain, or appear to retain, a perfect immobility under all circumstances? It is pretty and interesting for a lady, at all events for a young lady, to exhibit her nervous tremors; a man sternly represses the exhibition of these. Stoic philosophy centuries since, and modern refinement in its last polish of manner, alike recognise the Red Indian's principle, that there is something manly, something fine, in the repression of human feeling. Here is a respect in which the extreme of civilization and the extreme of barbarism closely approach one another. The Red Indian really did not care for anything; the modern fine gentleman, the youthful exquisite, though really pretty nervous, wishes to convey by his entire deportment the impression, that he does not care for anything. A man is to exhibit no strong emotion. It is unmanly. If he is glad, he must not look it. If he loses a great deal more money than he can afford on the Derby, he must take it coolly. Everything is to be taken coolly: and some indurated folk no doubt are truly as cool as they look. Let me have nothing to do with

such. *Nil admirari* is not a good maxim for a man. The coolest individual who occurs to me at this moment, is Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*. He was not a pleasant character. That coolness is not human. It is essentially Satanic. But in many people in modern days the apparent coolness covers a most painful nervousness. Indeed, as a general rule, whenever any one does anything which is (socially speaking) outrageously daring, it is because he is nervous; and struggling with the feeling, and striving to conceal the fact. A speaker who is too forward, who is jauntily free and easy, is certainly very nervous. And though I have said that perfect coolness in all circumstances is not amiable or desirable, still one cannot look but with interest, if not with sympathy, at Campbell's fine description of the Red Indian:

He said,—and strained unto his heart the boy:
Far differently, the mute Oneyda took
His calumet of peace and cup of joy:
As monumental bronze unchanged his look;
A soul that pity touched, but never shook;
Trained from his tree-rocked cradle to his bier
The fierce extremes of good and ill to brook
Impassive, —fearing but the shame of fear,—
A Stoic of the woods,—a man without a tear!

The writings of Mr. Dickens furnish me with a companion picture adapted to modern times. I confess that, upon reflection, I doubt whether a considerable portion of the interest of Outalissi's peculiar manner may not be derived from distance in time and space. Indian immobility and stoical philosophy are not sublime in the servants' hall of modern society:—

'I don't know anything,' said Britain, with a leaden eye and an immovable visage. 'I don't care for anything. I don't make out anything. I don't believe anything. And I don't want anything.' *

* *The Battle of Life: Christmas Books*, p. 169.

Nervous people should live in large towns. The houses are so big and afford such impervious shadow, that the nervous man, very little when compared with them, does not feel himself pushed into painful prominence. It is a comfort, too, to see many other people going about. It carries the nervous man out of himself. It reminds him that multitudes more have their cares as well as he. It dispels the uncomfortable feeling which grows on such people in the country, that everybody is thinking and talking of them, — to see numbers of men and women, all quite occupied with their own concerns, and evidently never thinking of them at all.

I have known one of these shrinking and evil-forboding persons say, that he could not have lived in the country (as he did), had not the district where his home was been very thickly wooded with large trees. It was a comfort to a man who wished to shrink out of sight and get quietly by, when the road along which he was walking wound into a thick wood. The trees were so big and so old, and they seemed to make a shelter from the outer world. In walking over a vast bare level down, a man is the most conspicuous figure in the landscape. There is nothing taller than himself, and he can be seen from miles away. Now, to be pushed into notice — to be made a conspicuous figure — is intensely painful to the nervous man. You and I, my reader, no doubt think such a state of feeling morbid, but it is probably a state to which circumstances might bring most people. And we can quite well understand that when pressed by care, sorrow, or fear, there is something friendly in the shade of trees — in anything that dims the light, and hides from public view. You remember the poor fellow (a very silly fellow indeed, but very silly fellows can suffer), who asked Little Dorrit

to marry him, and met a decided though a kind refusal. He lived somewhere over in Southwark, in a street of poor houses, which had little back-greens, but of course no trees in them. But the poor fellow felt the instinctive longing of the stricken heart for shadow ; and so, when his mother hung out the clothes from the wash on ropes crossing and re-crossing the little green, he used to go out and sit amid the flapping sheets, and say that ‘ he felt it *like groves !* ’ Was not that a testimony to the friendly congeniality of trees to the sad or timorous human being ? And when Cowper wearied to get away from a turbulent world to some quiet retreat, he did not wish that that retreat should be in an open country. No, he says —

Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless *contiguity of shade*,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more !

To the same effect did the same shrinking poet express himself in lines equally familiar : —

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since : with many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in *distant shades*.

I suppose that if some heavy blow had fallen upon any of us, we should not choose the open field or the bare hillside as the place to which we should go to think about it. We should rather choose some low-lying, sheltered, shaded spot. Great sorrow does not parade itself. It wishes to get out of sight.

As to the question how this nervousness may be got rid of, it is difficult to know what to think. It is in great

measure a physieal condition, and not under the control of the will. Some people would treat it physieally — send the nervous man to the water-cure, — put him in training like a prize-fighter or a pedestrian, and the like. These are exeellent things ; still I have greater confidence in mental remedies. Give the evil-foreboding man plenty to do ; push him out of his quiet eourse of life into the turmoil which he shrinks away from, and the turmoil will lose its fears. Work is the healthy atmosphere for a human being. The soul of man is a maehine with this great peeuliarity about it, — that we cannot stop it from motion when we will. Perhaps *that* is a defeet. Many a man, through a weary sleepless night, has longed for the power to push some lever or catch into the swift-running engine that was whirring away within him, and bring it to a stand. However, it eannot be. And as the maehine *will* go on, we must provide it with grist to grind, we must give it work to do, or it will knoeck itself in pieces ; or if not *that*, then get all warped and twisted, so that it never shall go without creaking, and straining, and trembling. And so, if you find a man or woman, young or old, vexed with ceaseless fears, worried with all kinds of odd ideas, doubts upon religious matters and the like, don't argue with them ; *that* is not the treatment that is necessary in the meantime. There is something else to be done first. It would do no good to blister a horse's legs till the previous inflammation has gone down. It will do no good to present the soundest views to a nervous, idle man. Set him to hard work. Give him lots to do. And then that invisible machine, which has been turning off misery and delusion, will begin to turn off content and sound views of all things. After two or **three** weeks of this healthful treatment you may proceed

to argue with your friend. In all likelihood you will find that argument will not be necessary. He has arrived at truth and sense already. There is a wonderfully close connexion between work and sound views ; between doing and knowing. It is in life as it is in religion 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'

Looking out now, I see it has grown quite light, though the day is gloomy, and will be so to its close. The train is speeding round the base of a great hill. Far below us a narrow little river is dashing on, all in foam. Its sound is faintly heard at this height. I said to myself, by way of winding up my musing upon nervousness : After all, is not this painful fact just an over-degree of that which makes us living beings ? Is it not just *life* too sensitively present in every atom of even the dull flesh ? There is that gray rock which we are passing ; how still and immovable *it* is ! All the stoicism of Greece, all the impassiveness of the mute Oneyda, all the indifference of the *pococurante* Englishman, how far they fall short of that sublime stillness ! But it is still because it is senseless. It looks as if it felt nothing, because it really feels nothing. I compare it with Lord Derby before he gets up to make a great speech ; fidgeting on his seat ; watching every movement and word of the man he is going to smash ; his wonderfully ready mind working with a whirr like wheel-work revolving unseen through its speed ; *living intensely*, in fact, in every fibre of his frame. Well, *that* is the finer thing, after all. The big cart-horse, already thought of, is something midway between the Premier and the granite. The stupid blockhead is cooler than the Premier, indeed ; but he is not so cool as the granite. If coolness be so fine a thing, of course the per-

fection of coolness must be the finest thing ; and *that* we find in the lifeless rock. What is life but that which makes us more sensitive than the rock : what is the highest type of life but that which makes us most sensitive ? It is better to be the warm, trembling, foreboding human being, than to be Ben Nevis, knowing nothing, feeling nothing, fearing nothing, cold and lifeless.

It is natural enough to pass from thinking of one human weakness to thinking of another ; and certain remarks of a fellow-traveller, not addressed to me, suggest the inveterate tendency to vapouring and big talking which dwells in many men and women. Who is there who desires to appear to his fellow-creatures precisely what he is ? I have known such people and admired them, for they are comparatively few. Why does Mr. Smith, when some hundreds of miles from home, talk of his *place in the country* ? In the etymological sense of the words it certainly is a place in the country, for it is a seedy one-storied cottage without a tree near it, standing bleakly on a hillside. But a *place in the country* suggests to the mind long avenues, great shrubberies, extensive greenhouses, fine conservatories, lots of horses, abundance of servants ; and *that* is the picture which Mr. Smith desires to call up before the mind's eye of those whom he addresses. When Mr. Robinson talks with dignity about the political discussions which take place in his *Servants' Hall*, the impression conveyed is that Robinson has a vast establishment of domestics. A vision rises of ancient retainers, of a dignified housekeeper, of a bishop-like butler, of Jeameses without number, of unstinted October. A man of strong imagination may even think of huntsmen, falconers, couriers — of a

grand baronial *menage*, in fact. You would not think that Robinson's establishment consists of a cook, a housemaid, and a stable-boy. Very well for the fellow too; but why will he vapour? When Mr. Jones told me the other day that something or other happened to him when he was going out 'to *the stables* to look at *the horses*,' I naturally thought, as one fond of horseflesh, that it would be a fine sight to see Jones's *stables*, as he called them. I thought of three handsome carriage-horses sixteen hands high, a pair of pretty ponies for his wife to drive, some hunters, beauties to look at and tremendous fellows to go. The words used might even have justified the supposition of two or three racehorses, and several lads with remarkably long jackets walking about the yard. I was filled with fury when I learned that Jones's *horses* consisted of a large brougham-horse, broken-winded, and a spavined pony. I have known a man who had a couple of moorland farms habitually talk of his *estate*. One of the commonest and weakest ways of vapouring is by introducing into your conversation, very familiarly, the names of people of rank whom you know nothing earthly about. 'How sad it is,' said Mrs. Jenkins to me the other day, 'about the duchess being so ill! Poor dear thing! *We are all in such great distress about her!*' 'We all' meant, of course, the landed aristocracy of the district, of which Mrs. Jenkins had lately become a member, Jenkins having retired from the hardware line and bought a small tract of quagmire. Some time ago a man told me that he had been down to Oatmealshire to see his *tenantry*. Of course he was not aware that I knew that he was the owner of just one farm. 'This is my parish we have entered,' said a youth of clerical appearance to me in a railway carriage. In one sense it

was; but he would not have said so had he been aware that I knew he was the curate, not the rector. 'How can Brown and his wife get on?' a certain person observed to me; 'they cannot possibly live: they will starve. Think of people getting married with not more than *eight or nine hundred a year!*' How dignified the man thought he looked as he made the remark! It was a fine thing to represent that he could not understand how human beings could do what he was well aware was done by multitudes of wiser people than himself. 'It is a cheap horse that of Wiggins's,' remarked Mr. Figgins; 'it did not cost more than seventy or eighty pounds.' Poor silly Figgins fancies that all who hear him will conclude that his own broken-kneed hack (bought for £25) cost at least £150. Oh, silly folk who talk big, and then think you are adding to your importance, don't you know that you are merely making fools of yourselves? In nine cases out of ten the person to whom you are relating your exaggerated story knows what the precise fact is. He is too polite to contradict you and to tell you the truth, but rely on it he *knows* it. No one believes the vapouring story told by another man; no, not even the man who fancies that his own vapouring story is believed. Every one who knows anything of the world knows how, by an accompanying process of mental arithmetic, to make the deductions from the big story told, which will bring it down to something near the truth. Frequently has my friend Mr. Snooks told me of the crushing retort by which he shut up Jeffrey upon a memorable occasion. I can honestly declare that I never gave credence to a syllable of what he said. Repeatedly has my friend Mr. Longbow told me of his remarkable adventure in the Bay of Biscay, when a whale very nearly swallowed

him. Never once did I fail to listen with every mark of implicit belief to my friend's narrative, but do you think I believed it? And more than once has Mrs. O'Callaghan assured me that the hothouses on her fawther's estate were three miles in length, and that each cluster of grapes grown on that favoured spot weighed above a hundred weight. With profound respect I gave ear to all she said; but, gentle daughter of Erin, did you think I was as soft as I seemed? You may just as well tell the truth at once, ye big talkers, for everybody will know it, at any rate.

It is a sad pity when parents, by a long course of big talking and silly pretension, bring up their children with ideas of their own importance which make them appear ridiculous, and which are rudely dissipated on their entering into life. The mother of poor Lollipop, when he went to Cambridge, told me that his genius was such that he was sure to be Senior Wrangler. And possibly he might have been if he had not been plucked.

It is peculiarly irritating to be obliged to listen to a vapouring person pouring out a string of silly exaggerated stories, all tending to show how great the vapouring person is. Politeness forbids your stating that you don't believe them. I have sometimes derived comfort under such an infliction from making a memorandum, mentally, and then, like Captain Cuttle, 'making a note' on the earliest opportunity. By taking this course, instead of being irritated by each successive stretch, you are rather gratified by the number and the enormity of them. I hereby give notice to all ladies and gentlemen whose conscience tells them that they are accustomed to vapour, that it is not improbable that I have in my possession a written list of remarkable statements made by them. It

is possible that they would look rather blue if they were permitted to see it.

Let me add, that it is not always vapouring to talk of one's self, even in terms which imply a compliment. It was not vapouring when Lord Tenterden, being Lord Chief Justice of England, standing by Canterbury Cathedral with his son by his side, pointed to a little barber's shop, and said to the boy, 'I never feel proud except when I remember that in that shop your grandfather shaved for a penny!' It was not vapouring when Burke wrote, 'I was 'not rocked, and swaddled, and dandled into a legislator: *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me!' It was not vapouring when Milton wrote that he had in himself a conviction that 'by labour and intent study, which he took to be his portion in this life, he might leave to after ages something so written as that men should not easily let it die.' Nor was it vapouring, but a pleasing touch of nature, when the King of Siam begged our ambassador to assure Queen Victoria that a letter which he sent to her, in the English language, was composed and written entirely by himself. It is not vapouring, kindly reader, when upon your return home after two or three days' absence, your little son, aged four years, climbs upon your knee, and begs you to ask his mother if he has not been a very good boy when you were away; nor when he shows you, with great pride, the medal which he has won a few years later. It is not vapouring when the gallant man who heroically jeopardized life and limb for the women's and children's sake at Lucknow, wears the Victoria Cross over his brave heart. Nor is it a piece of national vapouring, though it is, sure enough, an appeal to proud remembrances, when England preserves religiously the stout

old *Victory*, and points strangers to the spot where Nelson fell and died.

But a shrieking whistle yells in my ear: my musings are suddenly pulled up. The hundred miles are traversed: the train is slackening its speed. It was half-past seven when we started: it is now about half-past eleven. We draw alongside the platform: *there* are faces I know. I see a black head over the palisade: *that* is my horse. It would be vapouring to say that my *carriage* awaits me; for though it has four wheels, it is drawn by no more than four legs. Drag out a portmanteau from under the seat, exchange a cap for a hat, open the door, jump out, bundle away home. And then, perhaps, I may tell some unknown friends who have the patience to read my essays, *How I mused in the railway train.*



CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING THE MORAL INFLUENCES OF THE DWELLING.

WHEN the great Emperor Napoleon was packed off to Elba, he had, as was usual with him, a sharp eye to theatrical effect. Indeed that distinguished man, during the period of his great elevation as well as of his great downfall, was subject, in a degree almost unexampled, to the tyranny of a principle which in the case of commonplace people finds expression in the representative inquiry, 'What will Mrs. Grundy say?' Whenever Napoleon was about to do anything particular, or was actually doing anything particular, he was always thinking to himself, 'What will Mrs. Grundy say?' Of course *his* Mrs. Grundy was a much bigger and much more important individual than *your* Mrs. Grundy, my reader. *Your* Mrs. Grundy is the ill-natured, tattling old tabby who lives round the corner, and whose window you feel as much afraid to pass as if it were a battery commanding the pavement, and as if the ugly old woman's baleful eyes were so many Lancaster guns. Or perhaps your Mrs. Grundy is the goodnatured friend (as described by Mr. Sheridan) who is always ready to tell you of anything she has heard to your disadvantage, but who would not

for the world repeat to you any kind or pleasant remark, lest the vanity thereby fostered should injuriously affect your moral development. But Napoleon's Mrs. Grundy consisted of Great Britain and Ireland, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, the United States; in brief, to Napoleon, Mrs. Grundy meant Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. And really, when a man is asking himself what the whole civilized world will think and say about what he is doing, and when he feels quite sure that it will think and say *something*, it is excusable if in what he does he has an eye to what Mrs. Grundy will think and say.

Accordingly, when the great Emperor was forced to exchange the imperial throne of France for the sovereignty of that little speck in the Mediterranean, his first and most engrossing reflection on his journey to Elba was, what will Mrs. Grundy say? And many thoughts not very pleasant to an ambitious man of unphilosophical temperament, would be suggested by the question. He would naturally think, Mrs. Grundy will be chuckling over my downfall. Mrs. Grundy will be saying that I, and all my aspirations and hopes, have been fearfully smashed. Mrs. Grundy will be saying, that it serves me right for my impudence. Mrs. Grundy will be saying (kindly) that it will do me a great deal of good. Amiable and benevolent old lady! Mrs. Grundy will be saying that I am now going away to my exile in very low spirits, feeling very bitter, very much disappointed, very thoroughly humbled, — going away (only Napoleon had not read Swift) in the extremity of impotent fury to 'die in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole.' Mrs. Grundy will be saying that when I get to Elba finally, I shall lead a poor life there; kicking about the dogs and

cats, swearing at the servants, whacking the horses viciously, perhaps even throwing plates at the attendants' heads. Such, the Emperor would think, will be the sayings of Mrs. Grundy. And the Emperor, not a man of resigned or philosophical temper, would know that in all this Mrs. Grundy would be nearly right. But at all events, says Napoleon to himself, she shall not have the satisfaction of thinking that she is so. I shall mortify Mrs. Grundy by making her think that I am perfectly jolly. I shall get her to believe that all this humiliation which she has heaped upon me is impotent to touch me where I can really feel. She shall think that she has not found the raw. And so, when Napoleon settled at Elba — stamped upon his coin, engraven upon his silver plate, emblazoned on his carriage panels, written upon his very china and crockery, — there blazed forth in Mrs. Grundy's view the defiant words, *Ubi cunque felix!*

Now, had Mrs. Grundy had much philosophic insight into human conduct and motives, she would have known that her purpose of humiliation and embitterment was attained, and that all her ill-set sayings had proved right. It was because in Elba the great exile was a bitterly disappointed man, that he so ostentatiously paraded before the world the assurance that he was 'happy anywhere.' It was because he thought so much of Mrs. Grundy, and attached so much importance to what she might say, that he hung out this flag of defiance. If he had really been as happy and as independent of outward circumstances as he said he was, he would not have taken the trouble to say so. Had Napoleon said nothing about himself, but begun to grow cabbages and train flowers, and grow fat and rosy, we should not have needed the motto. But if any man, Emperor or not, trumpet forth on the house-

tops that he is *ubicunque felix*; and if we find him walking moodily by the sea-shore, with a knitted brow and absent air, and a very poor appetite, why, my reader, the answer to his statement may be conveyed, inarticulately, by a low and prolonged whistle; or articulately, by an advice to address that statement to the marines.

If there be a thing which I detest, it is a diffuse and rambling style. Let any writer always treat his subject in a manner terse and severely logical. My own model is Tacitus, and the earlier writings of Bacon. Let a man say in a straightforward way what he has got to say; and the more briefly the better. And above all, young writer, avoid that fashion which is set by the leading articles of the *Times*, of beginning your observations upon a subject with something which to the ordinary mind appears to have nothing earthly to do with it. By carefully carrying out the advices here tendered to you, you may ultimately, after several years of practice, attain to a limited success as an obscure third-rate essayist.

Napoleon, then (to resume our argument after this little *excursus*), paraded before the world the declaration that it did not matter to him where he might be; he would be 'happy anywhere.' What tremendous nonsense he talked! Why, setting aside altogether such great causes of difference as an unhealthy climate, stupid society or no society at all, usefulness or uselessness, honour or degradation, — I do not hesitate to say that the scenery amid which a man lives, and the house in which he lives, have a vast deal to do with making him what he is. The same man (to use an expression which is only seemingly Hibernian) is an entirely different man when put in a different place. Life is in itself a neutral thing, colourless and tasteless; it takes its colour and its fla-

your from the scenes amid which we lead it. It is like water, which external influences may make the dirtiest or cleanest, the bitterest or sweetest, of all things. Life, character, feeling, are things very greatly dependent on external influences. In a larger sense than the common saying is usually understood, we are 'the creatures of circumstances.' Only very stolid people are not affected by the scenes in which they live. I do not mean to say that an appreciable difference will be produced on a man's character by varied *classes* of scenery; that is, that the same man will be appreciably different, morally, according as you place him for days on a rocky, stormy coast; on a level sandy shore; inland in a fertile wooded country; inland among bleak wild hills; among Scotch firs with their long bare poles; horse-chestnuts blazing with their June blossoms; or thick full laurels, and yews, and hollies, thick to the ground, and shutting an external world out. I do not mean to say that ordinary people will feel any appreciable variation of the moral and spiritual atmosphere, traceable for its cause to such variety of scene. A man must be fashioned of very delicate clay, he must have a nervous system very sensitive, morbidly sensitive perhaps, if such things as these very decidedly determine what he shall be, morally and intellectually, for the time. Yet no doubt such matters have upon many human beings a real effect. If you live in a country house into whose grounds you enter through a battlemented gateway under a lofty arch; if the great leaves of the massive oak and iron gate are swung back to admit you, as you pass from the road outside to the sequestered pleasance within, where the grass, the gravel, the evergreens, the flowers, the winding paths, the little pond, the noisy little brook that passes beneath the rustic bridge, are all cut off from

the outer world by a tall battlemented wall, too tall for leaping or looking over, — I think that, at first at least, you will have a different feeling all day, you will be a different man all day, for that arched gateway and that battlemented wall. You will not feel as if you had come in by a common five-bar gate, painted green, hung from freestone pillars, five or six feet high, and shaded with laurels. It is wonderful what an effect is produced upon many minds by even a single external circumstance such as that; nor can I admit that there is anything morbid in the mind which is affected by such things. A very little thing, a solitary outward fact, may, by the influence of associations not necessarily personal, become idealized into something whose flavour reaches, like salt in cookery, perceptibly through all life. ‘You may laugh as you please,’ says one of the most thoughtful and delightful of English essayists, ‘but life seems somewhat insupportable to me without a pond — a squarish pond, not over clean.’ You and I do not know, my readers, what early recollections may have made such a little piece of water something whose presence shall appreciably affect the genial philosopher’s feeling day by day, and hour by hour. The savour of its presence (I don’t speak materially) may reach everywhere. And if there be anything which that writer is *not*, he is not morbid; and he is not fanciful in the sense in which a fanciful person means a chronicler of morbid impressions. And we all remember the little child in Wordsworth’s poem, who persisted in expressing a decided preference for one place in the country above another which appeared likely to have greater attractions; and who, when pressed for his reasons, did, after much reflection, fix upon a single fact as the cause of his preference: —

At Kilve there was no weathercock;
And that's the reason why.

No one can tell how that weathercock may have obtruded itself upon the little man's dreams, or how thoroughly its presence may have permeated all his life. I know a little child, three years and a half old, whose entire life for many weeks appeared embittered by the presence of a dinner-bell upon the hall-table of her home. She could not be induced to go near it; she trembled with terror when she heard it rung: it fulfilled for her the part of Mr. Thackeray's famous skeleton. And I am very sure that we have all of us dinner-bells and weathercocks which haunt and worry us, and squarish ponds which give a savour to our life. And for any ordinary mortal to say that he is *ubicunque felix* is pure nonsense. Napoleon found it was nonsense even at Elba; and at St. Helena he found it yet more distinctly. No man can say truly that he is the same wherever he goes. That sublime elevation above outward circumstances is not attainable by beings all of whom are half, and a great many of whom are a good deal more than half, material. We are all moral chameleons; and we take the colour of the objects among which we are placed.

Here am I this morning, writing on busily. I am all alone in a quiet little study. The prevailing colour around me is green—the chairs, tables, couches, book-cases, are all of oak, rich in colour, and growing dark through age, but green predominates: window-curtains, table-covers, carpet, rug, covers of chairs and couches, are green. I look through the window, which is some distance off, right before me. The window is set in a frame of green leaves: it looks out on a quiet corner of the garden. There is a wall not far off green with ivy and

other climbing plants ; there is a bright little bit of turf like emerald, and a clump of evergreens varying in shade. Over the wall I see a round green hill, crowned by oaks which autumn has not begun to make sere. How quiet everything is ! I am in a comparatively remote part of the house, and there is no sound of household life ; no pattering of little feet ; no voices of servants in discussion less logical and calm than might be desired. The timepiece above the fire-place ticks audibly ; the fire looks sleepy ; and I know that I may sit here all day if I please, no one interrupting me. No man worth speaking of will spend his ordinary day in idleness ; but it is pleasant to think that one may divide one's time and portion out one's day at one's own will and pleasure. Such a mode of life is still possible in this country : we do not all as yet need to live in a ceaseless hurry, ever drive, driving on till the worn-out machine breaks down. By and bye this life of unfeverish industry, and of work whose results are tangible only to people of cultivation, will no doubt cease ; and it will tend materially to hasten that consummation when the views of the *Times* are carried out, and all the country clergy are required to keep a diary like a rural policeman, showing how each hour of their time is spent, and open to the inspection of their employers. Now, in a quiet scene like this, where there is not even the little noise of a village near, though I can hear the murmur of a pretty large river, must not the ordinary human being be a very different being from what he would be were he sitting in some gas-lighted counting-house in Manchester, turning over large vellum-bound volumes, adding long rows of figures, talking on sales and prices to a hundred and fifty people in the course of the day, looking out through the

window upon a foggy atmosphere, a muddy pavement, a crowded street, huge drays lumbering by with their great horses, with a general impression of noise, hurry, smoke, dirt, confusion, and no rest or peace? It would be an interesting thing for some one equal to the task to go over Addison's papers in the *Spectator*, and try to make out the shade of difference in them which might be conceived as resulting from the influences of the place where they were severally written. It is generally understood that the well-known letters by which Addison distinguished his essays referred to the places where they were composed; the letters in the *CLIO* indicating Chelsea, London, Islington, and the Office. Did the sensitive, shy genius feel that in the production dated from each scene there would be some trace of what Yankees call the surroundings amid which it was produced? No doubt a mind like Addison's, impassive as he was, would turn off very different material according to the conditions in which the machine was working. As for Dick Steele, probably it made very little difference to him where he was: at the coffeehouse table, with noise and bustle all about him, he would write as quietly as though he had been quietly at home. *He* was indurated by long usage; the hide of a hippopotamus is not sensitive to gentle influences which would be felt by your soft hand, my fair friend. But in the case of ordinary educated men there is no greater fallacy than that suggested by that vile old subject for Latin themes, that *cælum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt*. Ordinary people, in changing the *cælum*, undergo a great change of the *animus* too. A judicious man would be extremely afraid of marrying any girl in England, and forthwith taking her out to India with him; for it would

be quite certain that she would be a very different person *there* from what she had been *here*; and how different and in what mode altered and varied only experience could show. So one might marry one woman in Yorkshire, and live with quite another at Boggley-wollah; and in marriage it is at least desirable to know what it is you are getting. Every one knows people who are quite different people according as they are in town or country. I know a man — an exceedingly clever and learned man — who in town is sharp, severe, hasty, a very little bitter, and just a shade ill-tempered, who on going to the country becomes instantly genial, frank, playful, kind, and jolly: you would not know him for the same man if his face and form changed only half as much as his intellectual and moral nature. Many men, when they go to the country, just as they put off frock-coats and stiff stocks, and put on loose shooting suits, big thick shoes, a loose soft handkerchief round their neck; just as they pitch away the vile hard hat of city propriety that pinches, cramps, and cuts the hapless head, and replace it by the light yielding wideawake; do mentally pass through a like process of relief: their whole spiritual being is looser, freer, less tied up. Such changes as that from town to country must, I should think, be felt by all educated people, and make an appreciable difference in the moral condition of all educated people. Few men would feel the same amid the purple moors round Harworth, and amid the soft English scenery that you see from Richmond Hill. Some individuals, indeed, whose mind is not merely torpid, may carry the same *animus* with them wherever they go; but their *animus* must be a very bad one. Mr. Scrooge, before his change of nature, was no doubt quite independent of external circum-

stances, and would no doubt have thought it proof of great weakness had he not been so. Nor was it a being of an amiable character in whose mouth Milton has put the words, 'No matter where, so *I* be still the same! And even in *his* mouth the sentiment was rather vapouring than true. But a dull, heavy, prosaic, miserly, cantankerous, cynical, suspicious, bitter old rascal would probably be much the same anywhere. Such a man's nature is indurated against all the influences of scenery, as much as the granite rock against sunshine and showers.

I dare say there are few people who do not unconsciously admit the principle of which so much has been said. Few people can look at a pretty tasteful villa, all gables, turrets, bay windows, twisted chimneys, verandahs, and balconies, set in a pleasant little expanse of shrubbery, with some fine forest-trees, a green bit of open lawn, and some winding walks through clumps of evergreens, without tacitly concluding that the people who live there must lead a very different life from that which is led in a dull smoky street, and a blackened, gardenless, grassless, treeless house in town; very different even from the life of the people in the tasteless square stuccoed box, with a stiff gravel walk going up to its door, a few hundred yards off. If you are having a day's sail in a steamer, along a pretty coast dotted with pleasant villages, you cannot repress some notion that the human beings whom you see loitering about there upon the rocks, in that pure air and genial idleness, are beings of a different order from those around you. You feel that to set foot on that pier, and to mingle with that throng, would carry you away a thousand miles in a moment; and make you as different from what you are as though you had suddenly dropt from

the sky into that quiet voluptuous valley of Typee, where Hermann Melville was so perfectly happy till he discovered that all the kindness of the natives was intended to make him the fatter and more palatable against that festival at which he was to be eaten. And no wonder that he felt comfortable, if that happy valley was indeed what he assures us it was :

There were no cares, griefs, troubles, or vexations, in all Typee. There were none of those thousand sources of irritation that the ingenuity of civilized man has created to mar his own felicity. There were no foreclosures of mortgages, no protested notes, no bills payable, no debts of honour, in Typee; no unreasonable tailors or shoemakers perversely bent on being paid, no duns of any description, no assault and battery attorneys to foment discord, backing their clients up to a quarrel, and then knocking their heads together; no poor relations everlastingly occupying the spare bedchamber, and diminishing the elbowroom at the family-table; no destitute widows, with their children starving on the cold charities of the world; no beggars, no debtors' prisons, no proud and hard-hearted nabobs in Typee; or, to sum up all in one word, — no Money! That root of all evil was not to be found in the valley.

In this secluded abode of happiness there were no cross old women, no cruel step-dames, no withered spinsters, no love-sick maidens, no sour old bachelors, no inattentive husbands, no melancholy young men, no blubbering youngsters, and no squalling brats. All was mirth, fun, and high good humour.

It is pleasant to read such a description. It is like being carried suddenly from the Royal Exchange on a crowded afternoon, to a grassy, shady bank by the side of a country river. Probably most of us have travelled by railway through a wild country; and when we stopped at some remote station among the hills, have wondered how the people there live, and thought how different their life must be from ours. Nor is it a mere fancy that takes possession of us when we look at the pretty Elizabethan dwelling, the thought of which

carried us all the way to the South Pacific. If people are calm enough to be susceptible of external impressions, life really *is* very different there. I do not say it is necessarily happier; but it is very different. Habit, indeed, equalizes the practical enjoyment of all lots, excepting only those of extreme suffering and degradation. Whatever level you get to in the scale of advantage, you soon get so accustomed to it that you do not mind much about it. When I used to study metaphysical philosophy, I remember that it appeared to me that this thought supplies by far the most serious of all objections to the doctrine (as taught by nature) of the Divine benevolence. It is a graver objection than the existence of positive evil. *That* may be conceived to be in some way inevitable; but why should it be that to get a thing instantly diminishes its value to half? I can think of a reason why; and a good reason too: but it is not drawn from the domain of philosophy. A poor fellow, toiling wearily along the dusty road, thinks how happy that man must be who is just now passing him, leaning back upon the cushions of that luxurious carriage, swept along by that pair of smoking thoroughbreds. Of course the poor fellow is mistaken. The man in the carriage is no happier than he. And, indeed, I can say conscientiously that the very saddest, most peevish, most irritable, and most discontented faces I have ever seen, I have seen looking out of extremely handsome carriage-windows. Luxury destroys real enjoyment. There is more real enjoyment in riding in a wheelbarrow than in driving in a carriage and four. Who does not remember the keen relish of the rapid run in the wheelbarrow of early youth, bumping and rolling about, and finally turning a corner at full speed

and upsetting? Who does not remember the delight of the little springless carriage that threatened to dislocate and grind down the bones? But it is indeed much to be lamented, that merely to get near the possession of any coveted thing instantly changes the entire look of it: it may still appear very good and desirable: but the romance is gone. When Mr. John Campbell, Student of Theology in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, N. B., was working away at his Hebrew, or drilling the lads to whom he acted as tutor, and living sparingly on a few pounds a year, he would no doubt have thought it a tremendous thing if he had been told that he would yet be a peer — that he would be, first Lord Chief Justice and then Lord High Chancellor of England — and that he would, upon more than one great occasion, preside over the assembled aristocracy of Britain. But as he got on step by step the gradation took off the force of contrast: each successive step appeared natural enough, no doubt: and now, when he is fairly at the top of the tree, if that most amiable and able Judge should ever wish to realize his elevation, I suppose he can do so only by recurring in thought to the links of St. Andrews, and to the days when he drilled his pupils in Latin and Greek. Student of Divinity, newspaper reporter, utter barrister, King's Counsel, Solicitor-General, Member for Edinburgh, Attorney-General, Baron Campbell of St. Andrews, Chief Justice of England, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain — each successive point was natural enough when won, though the end made a great change from the Manse of Cupar. And when another Scotch clergyman's son, from a parish adjoining that of Lord Campbell's father, also went up to London about the same time, a poor struggling artist, he and all his family

would doubtless have thought it a grand elevation, had they been told that he was to become one of the most distinguished members of the Royal Academy. There is something intensely affecting in the letters which the minister of Cults (it was a very poor living) sent to his boy in London, saying that he could, by pinching, send him, if needful, four or five pounds. But before Sir David became the great man he grew, old Mr. Wilkie was in his grave: 'his son came to honour, and he knew it not.' No doubt it was better as it was; but if you or I, kindly reader, had had the ordering of things, the worthy man should have lived to see what would have gladdened his simple heart at last.

Still, making every deduction for the levelling result of getting used to things, a great deal of the enjoyment of life, high or low, depends on the scenery amid which one dwells, and the house in which one lives — I mean the house regarded even in a merely æsthetic point of view. It needs no argument to prove that if one's abode is subject to the grosser physical disadvantages of smoky chimneys, damp walls, neighbouring bogs, incurable draughts, rattling windows, unfitting doors, and the like, the result upon the temper and the views of the man thus afflicted will not be a pleasing one. A constant succession of little contemptible worries tends to foster a querulous, grumbling disposition, which renders a human being disagreeable to himself and intolerable to his friends. Real, great misfortunes and trials may serve to ennoble the character; but ever-recurring petty annoyances produce a littleness and irritability of mind. And while great misfortune at once engages our sympathy, petty annoyances ill borne make the sufferer a laughing-stock. There is something dignified in Napoleon smashed at

Waterloo: there is nothing fine about Napoleon at St Helena, swearing at his ill-made soup, and cursing up and down stairs at his insufficient allowance of clean shirts. But I am not now talking of abodes pressed by physical inconveniences. It is somewhat of a truism to say a man cannot be comfortable when he is uncomfortable; and *that* is the sum of what is to be said on that head. I mean now that one's home, æsthetically regarded, has much influence upon our enjoyment of life. It is a great matter towards making the best of this world (and possibly, too, of the next), that our dwelling shall be a pretty one, a pleasant one, and placed amid pleasant scenes. It is a constant pleasure to live in such a home; and it is a still greater pleasure to make it. I do not think I have ever seen happier people, or people who appeared more thoroughly enviable, than people who have been building a pretty residence in the country. Of course they must be building it for themselves to have the full satisfaction of it; also it must not be too large; and finally, it must not be bigger nor grander than they can afford. The last-named point is essential. A duke inherits his castle — he did not build it; and it is too large and splendid for the peculiar feeling which I am describing. It has its own peculiar charms: the charm of vastness of dwelling and domain; the charm of hoary age and historic memories, and of connexion with departed ancestors, and of associations which the millions of the *parvenu* cannot buy. But it lacks the especial charm which Scott felt when he was building Abbotsford; and which lesser men feel when sitting on a stone on a summer morning, and watching the walls going up, listening to the clinking of the chisel, planning out the few acres of ground, and idealizing the life which is

to be led there ; seeing with half-closed eyes that muddy wheel-cut expanse all green and trim ; and little Jamie running about the walk which will be there in after-days ; and little Lucy diligently planting weeds in the corner where her garden will be. Here, surely, we think, the last days or years may peacefully go by ; and here may we, though somewhat scarred in the battle of life, and somewhat worn with its cares, find a quiet haven at last. To me it is always pleasant reading when I fall in with books about planning and building such homes as these. At the mention of the *Cottage*, and even of the *Villa* (though I don't like that latter word, it sounds vulgar and cockneyfied and affected ; but I fear we must accept it, for there is no other which conveys the idea of the modest yet elegant country-house for people of refinement, but not of great means), there rises up before the mind's-eye, as if by an enchanter's wand, a whole life of quiet enjoyment. Surely, life in the cottage or the country-house might be made a very pleasing, pure, and happy thing. In that unbreathed air, amid those beautiful scenes, surrounded by the gentle processes and teachings of nature, it is but that outward nature and human life should, on some fair summer day, be wrought into a happy conformity ; and we should need no other heaven. Take the outward creation at her best, and for all the thorns and thistles of the Fall, *she* would do yet !

I find a great pleasure in reading books of practical architecture : and I have lately found out one by an American architect, one Mr. Calvert Vaux, which carries one into fresh fields. It is a large handsome volume, luxurious in the size of its type, and admirable for the excellence of its abundant illustrations. I have more to say of its contents by-and-bye, and shall here say only,

that to read such a book with pleasure, the reader must have some little imagination and a good deal of sympathy, so as not to rest on mere architects' designs and builders' specifications, but to picture out and enter into the quiet life which these suggest. Everything depends upon *that*. Therein lies the salt of such a book. The enjoyment of all things beyond eating and drinking arises out of our idealizing them. Do you think that a child who will spend an hour delightedly in galloping round the garden on his horse, which horse is a stick, regards that stick as a mere bit of wood? No: that stick is to him instinct with imaginings of a pony's pattering feet and shaggy mane, and erect little ears. It is not so long since the writer was accustomed to ride on horseback in that inexpensive fashion, but what he can remember all that the stick was; and remember too how sometimes fancy would flag, the idealizing power would break down, and from being a horse the stick became merely a stick, a dull, wearisome, stupid thing. And of what little things imagination, thus elevating and enchanting them, can make how much! You remember the poor little solitary girl, in the wretched kitchen of Sally Brass, in the *Old Curiosity Shop*. Never was there life more bare of anything like enjoyment than the life which that poor creature led. Think, you folk who grumble at your lot, of a life whose features are sketched by such lines as a dark cellar, utter solitude, black beetles, cold potatoes, cuffs and kicks. Yet the idealizing power could convey some faint tinge of enjoyment even into the cellar of House of Brass. The poor little thing, when she made the acquaintance of Mr. Richard Swiveller, inquired of him had he ever tasted orange-peel wine. How was it made, he asked. The recipe was simple:

take a tumbler of cold water, put a little bit of orange-peel into it, and the beverage is ready for use. It has not much taste, added the little solitary, unless you *make believe very much*. Sound and deep little philosopher! We must apply the same prescription to life, and all by which life is surrounded. You are not to accept them as bare prosaic facts: you must make believe very much. Scott made believe very much at Abbotsford; we all make believe very much at Christmas-time. Likewise at sight of the first snowdrop in springs after we have begun to grow old; also when hawthorn blossoms and lilacs come again. And what a bare, cold, savourless life is sketched by the memorable lines which set before us the entire character of a man who could not make believe:—

In vain, through every changing year,
Did nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him, —
And it was nothing more!

Let me recommend to the man with a taste for such subjects, Mr. Sanderson's *Rural Architecture*, a neat little manual of a hundred pages, with a number of drawings and ground-plans of labourers' cottages, pretty little villas, village schools, and farm-steadings. And any reader may call it his upon payment of one shilling. To the man who has learned to make believe, there will be more than a shilling's worth of enjoyment in the frontispiece, which is a plain but pretty Gothic cottage, surrounded with trees, a little retired from the road, which is reached through a neat rustic gateway, and with the spire of a village church two hundred yards off, peeping through trees and backed by quiet fields rising into hills

of no more than English height. A footpath winds through the field towards the clump of wood in which stands the church. The book is a sensible and well-informed one. Its author tells us, but not till the seventieth page of his hundred, that he is 'simply desirous of having an agreeable half-hour's chat with the reader who may take a fancy to indulge in the instructive pastime of building his own house, and who does not please to appear thoroughly ignorant of the matter he is about.'

Mr. Sanderson appears from his book to have but a poor opinion of human nature. He is by no means a 'confidence-man.' The book is full of cautions as to the necessity of closely watching work-people lest they should cheat you, and do their work in a dishonest and insufficient manner. I lament to say that my own little experience leads me to think that these cautions are by no means unnecessary. I do not think that builders and carpenters are as bad as horsedealers, whose word no man in his senses should regard as of the worth of a pin; but it is extremely advisable to keep a sharp eye upon them while their work is progressing. Work improperly done, or done with insufficient materials, will certainly cause much expense and annoyance at a future day; still, the constantly-recurring statements as to the likelihood of fraud, leave on one's mind an uncomfortable impression. Our race is not in a sound state. But perhaps it is too severe to judge that a decent-looking and well-to-do individual is a dishonest man, merely because he will at any time tell a lie to make a little money by it.

There is a satisfaction in finding confirmation of one's own views in the writings of other men; and so I quote with pleasure the following from Dr. Southwood Smith:—

A clean, fresh, and well-ordered house exercises over its inmates a moral, no less than a physical influence, and has a direct tendency to make the members of the family sober, peaceable, and considerate of the feelings and happiness of each other; nor is it difficult to trace a connexion between habitual feelings of this sort and the formation of habits of respect for property, for the laws in general, and even for those higher duties and obligations the observance of which no laws can enforce. Whereas, a filthy, squalid, unwholesome dwelling, in which none of the decencies common to society — even in the lowest stage of civilization — are or can be observed, tends to make every dweller in such a hovel regardless of the feelings and happiness of each other, selfish, and sensual. And the connexion is obvious between the constant indulgence of appetites and passions of this class, and the formation of habits of idleness, dishonesty, debauchery, and violence.

There is something very touching in a description in *Household Words* of the moral results of wretched dwellings, such as those in parts of Bethnal-green, in the eastern region of London. Misery and anxiety have here crushed energy out; the people are honest, but they are palsied by despair:—

The people of this district are not criminal. A lady might walk unharmed at midnight through their wretched lanes. Crime demands a certain degree of energy; but if there were ever any harm in these well-disposed people, it has been tamed out of them by sheer want. They have been sinking for years. Ten years ago, or less, the men were politicians; now, they have sunk below that stage of discontent. They are generally very still and hopeless; cherishing each other; tender not only towards their own kin, but towards their neighbours; and they are subdued by sorrow to a manner strangely resembling the quiet and refined tone of the most polished circles.

Very true to nature! How well one can understand the state of mind of a poor man quite crushed and spirit-broken: poisoned by ceaseless anxiety; with no heart to do anything; many a time wishing that he might but creep into a quiet grave; and meanwhile trying to shrink out of sight and slip by unnoticed! Despair nerves for

a little while, but constant care saps, and poisons, and palsies. Nor does it do so in Bethnal-green alone, or only in dwellings which are undrained and unventilated, and which cannot exclude rain and cold. Elsewhere, as many of my readers have perhaps learned for themselves, it has shattered many a nervous system, unstrung many a once vigorous mind, crushed down many a once hopeful spirit, and aged many a man who should have been young by his years.

I suppose it is now coming to be acknowledged by all men 'of sense, that it is a Christian duty to care for our fellow-creatures' bodies as well as for their souls; and that it is hateful cant and hypocrisy to pray for the removal of diseases which God by the revelations of Nature has taught us may be averted by the use of physical means, while these means have not been faithfully employed. When cholera or typhus comes, let us white-wash blackened walls, flush obstructed sewers, clear away intermural pigsties, abolish cesspools, admit abundant air and light, and supply unstinted water:—and having done all we can, let us then pray for God's blessing upon what we have done, and for His protection from the plague which by these means we are seeking to hold away from us. Prayers and pains must go together alike in the physical and in the spiritual world. And I think it is now coming to be acknowledged by most rational beings, that houses ought to be pretty as well as healthy; and that houses, even of the humblest class, *may* be pretty as well as healthy. By the Creator's kind arrangement, beauty and use go together; the prettiest house will be the healthiest, the most convenient, and the most comfortable. And I am persuaded that great moral results

follow from people's houses being pretty as well as healthy. Every one understands at once that a wretched hovel, dirty, ruinous, stifling, bug-infested, dunghill surrounded, will destroy any latent love of neatness and orderliness in a poor man; will destroy the love of home, that preservative against temptation which ranks next after religion in the heart, and send the poor man to the public-house, with all its ruinous temptations. But probably it is less remembered than it ought to be, that the home of poor man or well-to-do man ought to be pleasing and inviting, as well as healthy. If not, he will not and cannot have the feeling towards it that it is desirable he should have. And all this is not less to be sought after in the ease of people who are so well off that though their home afford no gratification of taste, and even lack the comfort which does not necessarily come with mere abundance, they are not likely to seek refuge at the ale-house, or to take to sottish or immoral courses of any kind. It makes an educated man domestic, it makes him a lover of neatness and accuracy, it makes him gentle and amiable (I mean in all but very extreme cases), to give him a pretty home. I wish it were generally understood that it does not of necessity cost a shilling more to build a pretty house of a certain size, than to build a hideous one yielding the like accommodation. Taste costs nothing. If you have a given quantity of building materials to arrange in order, it is just as easy and just as cheap to arrange them in a tasteful and graceful order and collocation, as in a tasteless, irritating, offensive, and disgusting one. Elaborate ornament, of course, costs dear: but it does not need elaborate ornament to make a pleasing house which every man of taste will feel enjoyment in looking at. Simple gracefulness is

all that is essentially needful in cottage and villa architecture. And in this æsthetic age, when there is a general demand for greater beauty in all physical appliances; when we are getting rid of the vile old willow-pattern, when bedroom crockery must be of graceful form and embellishment, when grates and fenders, chairs and couches, window curtains and carpets, oilcloth for lobby floors and paper for covering walls, must all be designed in conformity with the dictates of an elevated taste, — it is not too much to hope that the day will come when every human dwelling that shall be built shall be so built and so placed that it shall form a picture pleasant to all men to look at. It is not necessary to say that this implies a considerable change from the state of matters at present existing in most districts of this country. And I trust it is equally unnecessary to say what school of domestic architecture must predominate if the day we wish for is ever to come. I trust that all my readers (excepting of course the one impracticable man in each hundred, who always thinks differently from everybody else, and always thinks wrong) will agree with me in holding it as an axiom needing no argument to support it, that every building which ranks under the class of villa or cottage, must, if intended to be tasteful or pleasing, be built in some variety of that grand school which is commonly styled the **GOTHIC**.

I know quite well that there are many persons in this world who would scout the idea that there is any necessity or any use for people who are not rich, to make any provision for their ideal life, for their taste for the beautiful. I can picture to myself some utilitarian old hunks, sharp-nosed, shrivelled-faced, with contracted brow, narrow intellect, and no feeling or taste at all, who would be

ready (so far as he was able) to ridicule my assertion that it is desirable and possible to provide something to gratify taste and to elevate and refine feeling, in the aspect and arrangement of even the humblest human dwellings. Beauty, some donkeys think, is the right and inheritance of the wealthy alone; food to eat, clothes to wear, a roof to shelter from the weather, are all that working men should pretend to. And indeed, if the secret belief of such dull grovellers were told, it would be that all people with less than a good many hundreds a year are stepping out of their sphere and encroaching on the demesne of their betters, when they aim at making their dwelling such that it shall please the cultivated eye as well as keep off wind and wet. Such mortals cannot understand or sympathize with the gratification arising from the contemplation of objects which are graceful and beautiful; and they think that if there be such a gratification at all, it is a piece of impudence in a poor man to aim at it. It is, they consider, a luxury to which he has no right; it is as though a ploughman should think to have champagne on his simple dinner-table. I verily believe that there are numbers of wealthy men, especially in the ranks of those who have made their own wealth, and who receive little education in youth, who think that the supply of animal necessities is all that any mortal (but themselves, perhaps) can need. I have known of such a man, who said with amazement of a youth whose health and life premature care was sapping, 'He is well-fed, and well-dressed, and well-lodged, and what the capital D more can the fellow want?' Why, if he had been a horse or a pig, he would have wanted nothing more; but the possession of a rational soul brings with it pressing wants which are not of a ma-

terial nature, which are not to be supplied by material things, and which are not felt by pigs and horses. And the craving for surrounding objects of grace and beauty is one of these; and it cannot be killed out but by many years of sordid money-making, or racking anxiety, or grinding want. The man whose whole being is given to finding food and raiment and sleep, is but a somewhat more intelligent horse. We have something besides a body, whose needs must be supplied; or if not supplied, then crushed out, and we be brought thus nearer to the condition of being mere soulless bodies. Mr. Vaux has some just remarks on the importance of a pleasant home to the young. It is indeed a wretched thing when, whether from selfish heedlessness or mistaken principle, the cravings of youthful imagination and feeling are systematically ignored, and life toned down to the last and most prosaic level. Says Mr. Vaux —

It is not for ourselves alone, but for the sake of our children, that we should love to build our homes, whether they be villas, cottages, or log-houses, beautifully and well. The young people are mostly at home: it is their storehouse for amusement, their opportunity for relaxation, their main resource; and thus they are exposed to its influence for good or evil unceasingly: their pliable, susceptible minds take in its whole expression with the fullest possible force, and with unerring accuracy. It is only by degrees that the young, hungry soul, born and bred in a hard, unlovely home, accepts the coarse fate to which not the poverty but the indifference of its parents condemns it. It is many, many years before the irrepressible longing becomes utterly hopeless: perhaps it is never crushed out entirely; but it is so stupefied by slow degrees into despairing stagnation, if a perpetually recurring blank surrounds it, that it often seems to die, and to make no sign: the meagre, joyless, torpid home atmosphere in which it is forced to vegetate absolutely starves it out; and thus the good intention that the all-wise Creator had in view, when instilling a desire for the beautiful into the life of the infant, is painfully frustrated. It is frequently from this cause, and from this alone, that an impulsive, high-spirited, light-hearted boy will dwindle by degrees

into a sharp, shrewd, narrow-minded, and selfish youth; from thence again into a prudent, hard, and horny manhood; and at last into a covetous, unloving, and unloved old age. The single explanation is all-sufficient: he never had a pleasant home.*

I trust my readers will conclude from this brief specimen of Mr. Vaux's quality, that if he be as thoroughly *up* in the practice of pleasant rural architecture as he is in the philosophy of it, he will be a very agreeable architect indeed. And, in truth, he is so, and his book is a very pleasant one. It is a handsome royal octavo volume of above three hundred pages; it is prodigally illustrated with excellent wood-engravings, which show the man who intends building a country-house an abundance of engaging examples from which to choose one. Nor are we shown merely a number of taking views in perspective; we have likewise the ground-plan of each floor, showing the size and height of each chamber; and further we are furnished with a careful calculation of the probable expense of each cottage or villa. Nor does Mr. Vaux's care extend only to the house proper: he shows some good designs for rustic gateways and fences, and some pretty plans for laying out and planting the piece of shrubbery and lawn which surrounds the abode. America, every one knows, is a country where a man must *push* if he wishes to get on; he must not be held back by any false modesty; and Mr. Vaux's book is not free from the suspicion of being a kind of advertisement of its author, who is described on the title-page as 'Calvert Vaux, Architect, late Downing and Vaux, of Newburgh, on the Hudson.' Then, on an otherwise blank page at the end of the volume, we find in large capitals the significant inscription, which renders it impossible for any one

* *Villas and Cottages*, pp. 115, 116.

who reads the book to say that he does not know where to find Mr. Vaux when he wants him : —

‘*Calvert Vaux, Architect,
Appleton’s Building,
348, Broadway.*’

American architecture appears to stand in sad need of improvement. Mr. Vaux tells us, no doubt very truly, that ‘ugly buildings are the almost invariable rule.’ In that land of measureless forests there is a building material common, which is little used now in Britain — *tw* wit, wood. Still, wood will furnish the material for very graceful and picturesque houses, even when in the rude form of logs; and the true blight of housebuilding in America was less the poverty and the hurry of the early colonists, than their puritan hatred and contempt of art, and of everything beautiful. Further, the democratic spirit could not tolerate the notion of anything being suffered to flourish which, as was wrongly thought, was to minister to the delight of only a select few.

American houses are for the most part square boxes, with no character at all. They are generally painted white, with bright green blinds: the effect is staring and ugly. In America, a perfectly straight line is esteemed the line of beauty, and a cube the most graceful of forms. Two large gridirons, laid across one another, exhibit the ground-plan of the large towns. Two smaller gridirons represent the villages. Mr. Vaux is strong for the use of graceful curves, and for laying out roads with some regard to the formation of the ground, and the natural features of interest. But a man of taste must meet many mortifications in a country where the following barbarity could be perpetrated : —

In a case that recently occurred near a country town at some distance from New York, a road was run through a very beautiful estate, one agreeable feature of which was a pretty though small pond, that, even in the dryest seasons, was always full of water, and would have formed an agreeable adjunct to a country seat. A single straight pencil line on the plan doubtless marked out the direction of the road; and as this line happened to go straight through the pond, straight through the pond was the road accordingly carried, the owner of the estate personally superintending the operation, and thus spoiling his sheet of water, diminishing the value of his lands, and incurring expense by the cost of filling-in without any advantage whatever; for a winding road so laid out as to skirt the pond would have been far more attractive and agreeable than the harsh, straight line that is now scored like a railway track clear through the undulating surface of the property; and such barbarisms are of constant occurrence.

No doubt they are, and they are of frequent recurrence nearer home. I have known places where, if you are anxious to get a body of men to make any improvement upon a church or school-house, it is necessary that you should support your plan solely by considerations of utility. Even to suggest the increase of beauty which would result would be quite certain to knock the entire scheme on the head.

Some features of American house-building follow from the country and climate. Such are the verandahs, and the hooded windows which form part of the design of every villa and every cottage represented in Mr. Vaux's book. The climate makes these desirable, and even essential. Such, too, is the abundance of houses built of wood, several designs for such houses being of considerable pretension. And only a hurried and hasty people, with little notion of building for posterity, would accept the statement, that in building with brick, eight inches thick are quite enough for the walls of any country-house, however large. The very slightest brick walls run up in England are, I believe, at least twelve inches thick. The

materials for roofing are very different from those to which we are accustomed. Slates are little used, having to be brought from England; tin is not uncommon. Thick canvas is thought to make a good roof when the surface is not great; zinc is a good deal employed; but the favourite roofing material is shingle, which makes a roof pleasing to American eyes.

It is agreeably varied in surface, and assumes by age a soft, pleasant, neutral tint that harmonizes with any colour that may be used in the building.

I am not much captivated by Mr. Vaux's description of the representative American drawing-room, which, it appears, is entitled the *best parlour*:—

The walls are hardfinished white, the woodwork is white, and a white marble mantelpiece is fitted over a fireplace which is never used. The floor is covered with a carpet of excellent quality, and of a large and decidedly sprawling pattern, made up of scrolls and flowers in gay and vivid colours. A round table with a cloth on it, and a thin layer of books in smart bindings, occupies the centre of the room, and furnishes about accommodation enough for one rather small person to sit and write a note at. A gilt mirror finds a place between the windows. A sofa occupies irrevocably a well-defined space against the wall, but it is just too short to lie down on, and too high and slippery with its spring convex seat to sit on with any comfort. It is also cleverly managed that points or knobs (of course ornamental and french-polished) shall occur at all those places towards which a wearied head would naturally tend, if leaning back to snatch a few moments' repose from fatigue. There is also a row of black-walnut chairs, with horse-hair (!) seats, all ranged against the white wall. A console-table, too, under the mirror, with a white marble top and thin gilt brackets. I think there is a piano. There is certainly a triangular stand for knickknacks, china, &c., and this, with some chimney ornaments, completes the furniture, which is all arranged according to stiff, immutable law. The windows and venetian blinds are tightly closed, the door is tightly shut, and the best room is in consequence always ready—for what? For daily use? Oh, no; it is in

every way too good for that. For weekly use? Not even for that; but for *company* use. And thus the choice room, with the pretty view, is sacrificed to keep up a conventional show of finery which pleases no one, and is a great, though unacknowledged, bore to the proprietors.

I am not sure that we in this country have much right to laugh at the folly which maintains such chilly and comfortless apartments. Even so uninhabited and useless is many a drawing-room which I could name on this side of the Atlantic. What an embodiment of all that is stiff, repellent, and uneasy, are the drawing-rooms of most widow ladies of limited means! My space does not permit another extract from Mr. Vaux, in which he explains his ideal of the way in which a cottage parlour should be arranged and furnished. Very pleasantly he sketches an unpretending picture, in which snugness and elegance, the *utile* and the *dulce*, are happily and inexpensively combined. But even here Mr. Vaux feels himself pulled up by a vision of a hard-headed and close-fisted old Yankee, listening with indignation, and bursting out with 'This will never do!'

We talk about houses, my friend; we look at houses; but how little the stranger knows of what they are! Search from cellar to garret some old country house, in which successive generations of boys and girls have grown up, but be sure that the least part of it is that which you can see, and not the most accurate inventory that ever was drawn up by appraiser will include half its belongings. There are old memories crowding about every corner of that home unknown to us: and to minds and hearts far away in India and Australia everything about it is sublimed, saddened, transfigured into something different from what it is to you and me. You know for yourself,

my reader, whether there be not something not present elsewhere about the window where you sat when a child and learned your lessons, the table once surrounded by many merry young faces which will not surround it again in this world, the fireside where your father sat, the chamber where your sister died. Very little indeed can sense do towards showing us the Home; or towards showing us any scene which has been associated with human life and feeling and embalmed in human memories. The same few hundred yards along the seashore, which are nothing to one man but so much ribbed sea-sand and so much murmuring water, may be to another something to quicken the heart's beating and bring the blood to the cheek. The same green path through the spring-clad trees, with the primroses growing beneath them, which lives in one memory year after year with its fresh vividness undiminished, may be in another merely a vague recollection, recalled with difficulty or not at all.

Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe,
 Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart;
 Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow, —
 Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart.



CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING HURRY AND LEISURE.



H what a blessing it is to have time to breathe, and think, and look around one! I mean, of course, that all this is a blessing to the man who has been overdriven: who has been living for many days in a breathless hurry, pushing and driving on, trying to get through his work, yet never seeing the end of it, not knowing to what task he ought to turn first, so many are pressing upon him altogether. Some folk, I am informed, like to live in a fever of excitement, and in a ceaseless crowd of occupations: but such folk form the minority of the race. Most human beings will agree in the assertion that it is a horrible feeling to be in a hurry. It wastes the tissues of the body; it fevers the fine mechanism of the brain; it renders it impossible for one to enjoy the scenes of nature. Trees, fields, sunsets, rivers, breezes, and the like, must all be enjoyed at leisure, if enjoyed at all. There is not the slightest use in a man's paying a hurried visit to the country. He may as well go there blindfold, as go in a hurry. He will never see the country. He will have a perception, no doubt, of hedgerows and grass, of green lanes and silent cottages, perhaps of great hills and rocks, of various items which go towards making the country; but the country itself he will never see.

That feverish atmosphere which he carries with him will distort and transform even individual objects ; but it will utterly exclude the view of the whole. A circling London fog could not do so more completely. For quiet is the great characteristic and the great charm of country scenes ; and you cannot see or feel quiet when you are not quiet yourself. A man flying through this peaceful valley in an express train at the rate of fifty miles an hour might just as reasonably fancy that to us, its inhabitants, the trees and hedges seem always dancing, rushing, and circling about, as they seem to him in looking from the window of the flying carriage ; as imagine that, when he comes for a day or two's visit, he sees these landscapes as they are in themselves, and as they look to their ordinary inhabitants. The quick pulse of London keeps with him : he cannot, for a long time, feel sensibly an influence so little startling, as faintly flavoured, as that of our simple country life. We have all beheld some country scenes, pleasing, but not very striking, while driving hastily to catch a train for which we feared we should be late ; and afterwards, when we came to know them well, how different they looked !

I have been in a hurry. I have been tremendously busy. I have got through an amazing amount of work in the last few weeks, as I ascertain by looking over the recent pages of my diary. You can never be sure whether you have been working hard or not, except by consulting your diary. Sometimes you have an oppressed and worn-out feeling of having been overdriven, of having done a vast deal during many days past ; when lo ! you turn to the uncompromising record, you test the accuracy of your feeling by that unimpeachable standard ; and you find that, after all, you have accomplished

very little. The discovery is mortifying, but it does you good; and besides other results, it enables you to see how very idle and useless people, who keep no diary, may easily bring themselves to believe that they are among the hardest-wrought of mortals. They know they feel weary; they know they have been in a bustle and worry; they think they have been in it much longer than is the fact. For it is curious how readily we believe that any strongly-felt state of mind or outward condition — strongly felt at the present moment — has been lasting for a very long time. You have been in very low spirits: you fancy now that you have been so for a great portion of your life, or at any rate for weeks past: you turn to your diary, — why, eight-and-forty hours ago you were as merry as a cricket during the pleasant drive with Smith, or the cheerful evening that you spent with Snarling. I can well imagine that when some heavy misfortune befalls a man, he soon begins to feel as if it had befallen him a long, long time ago: he can hardly remember days which were not darkened by it: it seems to have been the condition of his being almost since his birth. And so, if you have been toiling very hard for three days — your pen in your hand almost from morning to night perhaps — rely upon it that at the end of those days, save for the uncompromising diary that keeps you right, you would have in your mind a general impression that you had been labouring desperately for a very long period — for many days, for several weeks, for a month or two. After heavy rain has fallen for four or five days, all persons who do not keep diaries invariably think that it has rained for a fortnight. If keen frost lasts in winter for a fortnight, all persons without diaries have a vague belief that there has been frost for a month or six weeks.

You resolve to read Mr. Wordy's valuable *History of the Entire Human Race throughout the whole of Time* (I take for granted you are a young person) : you go at it every evening for a week. At the end of that period you have a vague uneasy impression, that you have been soaked in a sea of platitudes, or weighed down by an incubus of words, for about a hundred years. For even such is life.

Every human being, then, who is desirous of knowing for certain whether he is doing much work or little, ought to preserve a record of what he does. And such a record, I believe, will in most cases serve to humble him who keeps it, and to spur on to more and harder work. It will seldom flatter vanity, or encourage a tendency to rest on the oars, as though enough had been done. You must have laboured very hard and very constantly indeed, if it looks much in black and white. And how much work may be expressed by a very few words in the diary ! Think of Elihu Burrit's 'forged fourteen hours, then Hebrew Bible three hours.' Think of Sir Walter's short memorial of his eight pages before breakfast,—and what large and closely written pages they were ! And how much stretch of such minds as they have got — how many quick and laborious processes of the mental machinery — are briefly embalmed in the diaries of humbler and smaller men, in such entries as 'after breakfast, walk in garden with children for ten minutes ; then Sermon on 10 pp. ; working hard from 10 till 1 P. M. ; then left off with bad headache, and very weary ? ' The truth is, you can't represent work by any record of it. As yet, there is no way known of photographing the mind's exertion, and thus preserving an accurate memorial of it. You might as well expect to find in such a general phase as a *stormy sea* the delineation

tion of the countless shapes and transformations of the waves throughout several hours in several miles of ocean, as think to see in Sir Walter Scott's *eight pages before breakfast* an adequate representation of the hard, varied wearing-out work that went to turn them off. And so it is, that the diary which records the work of a very hard-wrought man, may very likely appear to careless, unsympathizing readers, to express not such a very laborious life after all. Who has not felt this, in reading the biography of that amiable, able, indefatigable, and overwrought man, Dr. Kitto? He worked himself to death by labour at his desk: but only the reader who has learned by personal experience to feel for him, is likely to see how he did it.

But besides such reasons as these, there are strong arguments why every man should keep a diary. I cannot imagine how many reflective men do not. How narrow and small a thing their actual life must be! They live merely in the present; and the present is only a shifting point, a constantly progressing mathematical line, which parts the future from the past. If a man keeps no diary, the path crumbles away behind him as his feet leave it; and days gone by are little more than a blank, broken by a few distorted shadows. His life is all confined within the limits of to-day. Who does not know how imperfect a thing memory is? It not merely forgets; it misleads. Things in memory do not merely fade away, preserving as they fade their own lineaments so long as they can be seen: they change their aspect, they change their place, they turn to something quite different from the fact. In the picture of the past, which memory unaided by any written record sets before us, the perspective is entirely wrong. How capriciously

some events seem quite recent, which the diary shows are really far away ; and how unaccountably many things look far away, which in truth are not left many weeks behind us ! A man might almost as well not have lived at all as entirely forget that he has lived, and entirely forget what he did on those departed days. But I think that almost every person would feel a great interest in looking back, day by day, upon what he did and thought upon that day twelvemonths, that day three or five years. The trouble of writing the diary is very small. A few lines, a few words, written at the time, suffice, when you look at them, to bring all (what Yankees call) the *surroundings* of that season before you. Many little things come up again which you know quite well you never would have thought of again but for your glance at those words, and still which you feel you would be sorry to have forgotten. There must be a richness about the life of a person who keeps a diary, unknown to other men. And a million more little links and ties must bind him to the members of his family circle, and to all among whom he lives. Life, to him, looking back, is not a bare line, stringing together his personal identity ; it is surrounded, intertwined, entangled, with thousands and thousands of slight incidents, which give it beauty, kindliness, reality. Some folk's life is like an oak walking-stick, straight and varnished ; useful, but hard and bare. Other men's life (and such may yours and mine, kindly reader, ever be), is like that oak when it was not a stick but a branch, and waved, leaf-enveloped, and with lots of little twigs growing out of it, upon the summer tree. And yet more precious than the power of the diary to call up again a host of little circumstances and facts, is its power to bring back the indescribable but keenly-felt atmosphere of those departed

days. The old time comes over you. It is not merely a collection, an aggregate of facts, that comes back ; it is something far more excellent than *that* : it is the soul of days long ago ; it is the dear *Auld lang syne* itself ! The perfume of hawthorn-hedges faded is there ; the breath of breezes that fanned our gray hair when it made sunny curls, often smoothed down by hands that are gone ; the sunshine on the grass where these old fingers made daisy chains ; and snatches of music, compared with which anything you hear at the Opera is extremely poor. Therefore keep your diary, my friend. Begin at ten years old, if you have not yet attained that age. It will be a curious link between the altered seasons of your life ; there will be something very touching about even the changes which will pass upon your handwriting. You will look back at it occasionally, and shed several tears of which you have not the least reason to be ashamed. No doubt when you look back, you will find many very silly things in it ; well, you did not think them silly at the time ; and possibly you may be humbler, wiser, and more sympathetic, for the fact that your diary will convince you (if you are a sensible person now), that probably you yourself, a few years or a great many years since, were the greatest fool you ever knew. Possibly at some future time you may look back with similar feelings on your present self : so you will see that it is very fit that meanwhile you should avoid self-confidence and cultivate humility ; that you should not be bumptious in any way ; and that you should bear, with great patience and kindness, the follies of the young. Therefore, my reader, write up your diary daily. You may do so at either of two times : 1st. After breakfast, whenever you sit down to your work, and before you be-

gin your work ; 2nd. After you have done your indoors work, which ought not to be later than two P. M., and before you go out to your external duties. Some good men, as Dr. Arnold, have in addition to this brought up their history to the present period before retiring for the night. This is a good plan ; it preserves the record of the day as it appears to us in two different moods : the record is therefore more likely to be a true one, uncoloured by any temporary mental state. Write down briefly what you have been doing. Never mind that the events are very little. Of course they must be ; but you remember what Pope said of little things. State what work you did. Record the progress of matters in the garden. Mention where you took your walk, or ride, or drive. State anything particular concerning the horses, cows, dogs, and pigs. Preserve some memorial of the progress of the children. Relate the occasion on which you made a kite or a water-wheel for any of them ; also the stories you told them, and the hymns you heard them repeat. You may preserve some mention of their more remarkable and old-fashioned sayings. *Forsitan et olim hæc meminisse juvabit* : all these things may bring back more plainly a little life when it has ceased ; and set before you a rosy little face and a curly little head when they have mouldered into clay. Or if you go, as you would rather have it, before them, why, when one of your boys is Archbishop of Canterbury and the other Lord Chancellor, they may turn over the faded leaves, and be the better for reading those early records, and not impossibly think some kindly thoughts of their governor who is far away. Record when the first snowdrop came, and the earliest primrose. Of course you will mention the books you read, and those (if any) which

you write. Preserve some memorial, in short, of everything that interests you and yours ; and look back each day, after you have written the few lines of your little chronicle, to see what you were about that day the preceding year. No one who in this simple spirit keeps a diary, can possibly be a bad, unfeeling, or cruel man. No scapegrace or blackguard could keep a diary such as that which has been described. I am not forgetting that various blackguards, and extremely dirty ones, *have* kept diaries, but they have been diaries to match their own character. Even in reading Byron's diary, you can see that he was not so much a very bad fellow, as a very silly fellow, who thought it a grand thing to be esteemed very bad. When, by the way, will the day come when young men will cease to regard it as the perfection of youthful humanity to be a reckless, swaggering fellow, who never knows how much money he has or spends, who darkly hints that he has done many wicked things which he never did, who makes it a boast that he never reads anything, and thus who affects to be even a more ignorant numskull than he actually is? When will young men cease to be ashamed of doing right, and to boast of doing wrong (which they never did)? 'Thank God,' said poor Milksop to me the other day, 'although I have done a great many bad things, I never did, &c. &c. &c.' The silly fellow fancied that I should think a vast deal of one who had gone through so much, and sown such a large crop of wild oats. I looked at him with much pity. Ah! thought I to myself, there *are* fellows who actually do the things you absurdly pretend to have done ; but if you had been one of those I should not have shaken hands with you five minutes since. With great difficulty did I refrain from patting

his empty head, and saying, 'Oh, poor Milksop, you are a tremendous fool!'

It is indeed to be admitted that by keeping a diary you are providing what is quite sure in days to come to be an occasional cause of sadness. Probably it will never conduce to cheerfulness to look back over those leaves. Well, you will be much the better for being sad occasionally. There are other things in this life than to put things in a ludicrous light, and laugh at them. *That*, too, is excellent in its time and place: but even Douglas Jerrold sickened of the forced fun of *Punch*, and thought this world had better ends than jesting. Don't let your diary fall behind: write it up day by day: or you will shrink from going back to it and continuing it, as Sir Walter Scott tells us he did. You will feel a double unhappiness in thinking you are neglecting something you ought to do, and in knowing that to repair your omission demands an exertion attended with especial pain and sorrow. Avoid at all events *that* discomfort of diary-keeping, by scrupulous regularity: there are others which you cannot avoid, if you keep a diary at all, and occasionally look back upon it. It must tend to make thoughtful people sad, to be reminded of things concerning which we feel that we cannot think of them; that they have gone wrong, and cannot now be set right; that the evil is irremediable, and must just remain, and fret and worry whenever thought of; and life go on under that condition. It is like making up one's mind to live on under some incurable disease, not to be alleviated, not to be remedied, only if possible to be forgotten. Ordinary people have all some of these things: tangles in their life and affairs that cannot be unravelled and must be left alone: sorrowful things

which they think cannot be helped. I think it highly inexpedient to give way to such a feeling; it ought to be resisted as far as it possibly can. The very worst thing that you can do with a skeleton is to lock the closet door upon it, and try to think no more of it. No: open the door: let in air and light: bring the skeleton out, and sort it manfully up: perhaps it may prove to be only the skeleton of a cat, or even no skeleton at all. There is many a house, and many a family, in which there is a skeleton, which is made the distressing nightmare it is, mainly by trying to ignore it. There is some fretting disagreement, some painful estrangement, made a thousand times worse by ill-judged endeavours to go on just as if it were not there. If you wish to get rid of it, you must recognise its existence, and treat it with frankness, and seek manfully to set it right. It is wonderful how few evils are remediless, if you fairly face them, and honestly try to remove them. Therefore, I say it earnestly, don't lock your skeleton-chamber door. If the skeleton *be* there, I defy you to forget that it is. And even if it could bring you present quiet, it is no healthful draught, the water of Lethe. Drugged rest is unrefreshful, and has painful dreams. And further; don't let your diary turn to a small skeleton, as it is sure to do if it has fallen much into arrear. There will be a peculiar soreness in thinking that it is in arrear; yet you will shrink painfully from the idea of taking to it again and bringing it up. Better to begin a fresh volume. There is one thing to be especially avoided. Do not on any account, upon some evening when you are pensive, down-hearted, and alone, go to the old volumes, and turn over the yellow pages with their faded ink. Never recur to volumes telling the story of years long

ago, except at very cheerful times in very hopeful moods : — unless, indeed, you desire to feel, as did Sir Walter, the connexion between the clauses of the scriptural statement, that *Ahithophel set his house in order and hanged himself*. In that setting in order, what old, buried associations rise up again : what sudden pang shoot through the heart, what a weight comes down upon it, as we open drawers long locked, and come upon the relics of our early selves, and schemes and hopes ! Well, your old diary, of even five or ten years since (especially if you have as yet hardly reached middle age), is like a repertory in which the essence of all sad things is preserved. Bad as is the drawer or the shelf which holds the letters sent you from home when you were a schoolboy : sharp as is the sight of that lock of hair of your brother, whose grave is baked by the suns of Hindostan ; riling (not to say more) as is the view of that faded ribbon or those withered flowers which you still keep, though Jessie has long since married Mr. Beest, who has ten thousand a-year : they are not so bad, so sharp, so riling, as is the old diary, wherein the spirit of many disappointments, toils, partings, and cares, is distilled and preserved. So don't look too frequently into your old diaries, or they will make you glum. Don't let them be your usual reading. It is a poor use of the past, to let its remembrances unfit you for the duties of the present.

I have been in a hurry, I have said ; but I am not so now. Probably the intelligent reader of the preceding pages may surmise as much. I am enjoying three days of delightful leisure. I did nothing yesterday : I am doing nothing to-day : I shall do nothing to-morrow. This 's June : let me feel that it is so. When in a

hurry, you do not realize that a month, more especially a summer month, has come, till it is gone. June: let it be repeated: the *leafy month of June*, to use the strong expression of Mr. Coleridge. Let me hear you immediately quote the verse, my young lady reader, in which that expression is to be found. Of course you can repeat it. It is now very warm, and beautifully bright. I am sitting on a velvety lawn, a hundred yards from the door of a considerable country house, not my personal property. Under the shadow of a large sycamore is this iron chair; and this little table, on which the paper looks quite green from the reflection of the leaves. There is a very little breeze. Just a foot from my hand, a twig with very large leaves is moving slowly and gently to and fro. There, the great serrated leaf has brushed the pen. The sunshine is sleeping (the word is not an affected one, but simply expresses the phenomenon) upon the bright green grass, and upon the dense masses of foliage which are a little way off on every side. Away on the left, there is a well-grown horse-chestnut tree, blazing with blossoms. In the little recesses where the turf makes bays of verdure going into the thicket, the grass is nearly as white with daisies as if it were covered with snow, or had several table-cloths spread out upon it to dry. Blue and green, I am given to understand, form an incongruous combination in female dress; but how beautiful the little patches of sapphire sky, seen through the green leaves! Keats was quite right; any one who is really fond of nature must be very far gone indeed, when he or she, like poor Isabella with her pot of basil, 'forgets the blue above the trees.' I am specially noticing a whole host of little appearances and relations among the natural objects within view, which no man in a hurry

would ever observe ; yet which are certainly meant to be observed, and worth observing. I don't mean to say that a beautiful thing in nature is lost because no human being sees it ; I have not so vain an idea of the importance of our race. I do not think that that blue sky, with its beautiful fleecy clouds, was spread out there just as a scene at a theatre is spread out, simply to be looked at by us ; and that the intention of its Maker is baulked if it be not. Still, among a host of other uses, which we do not know, it cannot be questioned that one end of the scenes of nature, and of the capacity of noting and enjoying them which is implanted in our being, is, that they should be noted and enjoyed by human minds and hearts. It is now 11.30 A. M., and I have nothing to do that need take me far from this spot till dinner, which will be just seven hours hereafter. It requires an uninterrupted view of at least four or five hours ahead, to give the true sense of leisure. If you know you have some particular engagement in two hours, or even three or four, the feeling you have is not that of leisure. On the contrary you feel that you must push on vigorously with whatever you may be about ; there is no time to sit down and muse. Two hours are a very short time. It is to be admitted that much less than half of that period is very long, when you are listening to a sermon ; and the man who wishes his life to appear as long as possible can never more effectually compass his end than by going very frequently to hear preachers of that numerous class whose discourses are always sensible and in good taste, and also sickeningly dull and tiresome. Half an hour under the instruction of such good men has oftentimes appeared like about four hours. But for quiet folk, living in the country, and who have never held the

office of attorney-general or secretary of state, two hours form quite too short a vista to permit of sitting down to begin any serious work, such as writing a sermon or an article. Two hours will not afford elbow-room. One is cramped in it. Give me a clear prospect of five or six; so shall I begin an essay. It is quite evident that Hazitt was a man of the town, accustomed to live in a hurry, and to fancy short blinks of unoccupation to be leisure, — even as a man long dwelling in American woods might think a little open glade quite an extensive clearing. He begins his essay on *Living to One's-self*, by saying that being in the country he has a fine opportunity of writing on that long contemplated subject, and of writing at leisure, because he has *three hours good before him*, not to mention a partridge getting ready for his supper. Ah, not enough! Very well for the fast-going high-pressure London mind; but quite insufficient for the deliberate, slow-running country one, that has to overcome a great *inertia*. How many good ideas, or at least ideas which he thinks good, will occur to the rustic writer; and be cast aside when he reflects that he has but two hours to sit at his task, and that therefore he has not a moment to spare for collateral matters, but must keep to the even thread of his story or his argument! A man who has four miles to walk within an hour, has little time to stop and look at the view on either hand; and no time at all for scrambling over the hedge to gather some wild flowers. But now I rejoice in the feeling of an unlimited horizon before me, in the regard of time. Various new books are lying on the grass; and on the top of the heap, a certain number of that trenchant and brilliant periodical, the *Saturday Review*. This is delightful! It is jolly! And let us always be glad, if through

training or idiosyncrasy we have come to this, my reader, that whenever you and I enjoy this tranquil feeling of content, there mingles with it a deep sense of gratitude. I should be very sorry to-day, if I did not know Whom to thank for all this. I like the simple, natural piety, which has given to various seats, at the top of various steep hills in Scotland, the homely name of *Rest and be thankful!* I trust I am now doing both these things. O ye men who have never been overworked and overdriven, never kept for weeks on a constant strain and in a feverish hurry, you don't know what you miss! Sweet and delicious as cool water is to the man parched with thirst, is leisure to the man just extricated from breathless hurry! And nauseous as is that same water to the man whose thirst has been completely quenched, is leisure to the man whose life is nothing but leisure.

Let me pick up that number of the *Saturday Review*, and turn to the article which is entitled *Smith's Drag*.* That article treats of a certain essay which the present writer once contributed to a certain monthly magazine; † and it sets out the desultory fashion in which his compositions wander about. I have read the article with great amusement and pleasure. In the main it is perfectly just. Does not the avowal say something for the writer's good-humour? Not frequently does the reviewed acknowledge that he was quite rightly pitched into. Let me, however, say to the very clever and smart author of *Smith's Drag*, that he is to some extent mistaken in his theory as to my system of essay writing. It is not entirely true that I begin my essays with irrelevant descrip-

* June 4th, 1859, pp. 677-8.

† 'Concerning Man and his Dwelling-place.'—*Fraser's Magazine* June, 1859, pp. 645-661.

tions of scenery, horses, and the like, merely because, when reviewing a book of heavy metaphysics, I know nothing about my subject, and care nothing about it, and have nothing to say about it; and so am glad to get over a page or two of my production without *bonâ fide* going at my subject. Such a consideration, no doubt, is not without its weight; and besides this, holding that every way of discussing all things whatsoever is good except the tiresome, I think that even Smith's Drag serves a useful end if it pulls one a little way through a heavy discussion; as the short inclined plane set Mr. Hensom's aerial machine off with a good start, without which it could not fly. But there is more than this in the case. The writer holds by a grand principle. The writer's great reason for saying something of the scenery amid which he is writing, is, that he believes that it materially affects the thought produced, and ought to be taken in connexion with it. You would not give a just idea of a country house by giving us an architect's elevation of its *façade*, and showing nothing of the hills by which it is backed, and the trees and shrubbery by which it is surrounded. So, too, with thought. We think in time and space; and unless you are a very great man, writing a book like Butler's *Analogy*, the outward scenes amid which you write will colour all your abstract thought. Most people hate abstract thought. Give it in a setting of scene and circumstances, and *then* ordinary folk will accept it. Set a number of essays in a story, however slight; and hundreds will read them who would never have looked twice at the bare essays. Human interest and a sense of reality are thus communicated. When any one says to me, 'I think thus and thus of some abstract topic,' I like to say to him, 'Tell me where you

thought it, how you thought it, what you were looking at when you thought it, and to whom you talked about it. I deny that in essays what is wanted is results. Give me processes. Show me how the results are arrived at. In some cases, doubtless, this is inexpedient. You would not enjoy your dinner if you inquired too minutely into the previous history of its component elements, before it appeared upon your table. You might not care for one of Goldsmith's or Sheridan's pleasantries, if you traced too curiously the steps by which it was licked into shape. Not so with the essay. And by exhibiting the making of his essay, as well as the essay itself when made, the essayist is enabled to preserve and exhibit many thoughts, which he could turn to no account did he exhibit only his conclusions. It is a grand idea to represent two or three friends as discussing a subject. For who that has ever written upon abstract subjects, or conversed upon them, but knows that very often what seem capital ideas occur to him, which he has not had time to write down or to utter before he sees an answer to them, before he discovers that they are unsound. Now, to the essayist writing straightforward these thoughts are lost; he cannot exhibit them. It will not do to write them, and then add that now he sees they are wrong. Here, then, is the great use — *one* great use — of the Ellesmere and Dunsford, who shall hold friendly council with the essayist. They, understood to be talking off-hand, can state all these interesting and striking, though unsound views; and then the more deliberate Milverton can show that they are wrong. And the three friends combined do but represent the phases of thought and feeling in a single individual: for who does not know that every reflective man is, at the very fewest, 'three gentlemen at once?'

Let me say for myself, that it seems to me that no small part of the charm which there is about the *Friends in Council* and the *Companions of My Solitude* arises from the use of the two expedients; of exhibiting processes as well as results, of showing how views are formed as well as the views themselves; and also of setting the whole abstract part of the work in a framework of scenes and circumstances. All this makes one feel a life-like reality in the entire picture presented, and enables one to open the leaves with a home-like and friendly sympathy. Do not fancy, my brilliant reviewer, that I pretend to write like that thoughtful and graceful author, so rich in wisdom, in wit, in pathos, in kindly feeling. All I say is, that I have learned from him the grand principle, that abstract thought, for ordinary readers, must gain reality and interest from a setting of time and place.

There is the green branch of the tree, waving about. The breeze is a little stronger, but still the air is perfectly warm. Let me be leisurely; I feel a little hurried with writing that last paragraph; I wrote it too quickly. To write a paragraph too quickly, putting in too much pressure of steam, will materially accelerate the pulse. *That* is an end greatly to be avoided. Who shall write hastily of leisure! Fancy Izaak Walton going out fishing, and constantly looking at his watch every five minutes, for fear of not catching the express train in half an hour! It would be indeed a grievous inconsistency. The old gentleman might better have stayed at home.

It is all very well to be occasionally, for two or three days, or even for a fortnight, in a hurry. Every earnest man, with work to do, will find that occasionally there comes a pressure of it; there comes a crowd of

things which must be done quickly if they are done at all; and the condition thus induced is hurry. I am aware, of course, that there is a distinction between haste and hurry—hurry adding to rapidity the element of painful confusion; but in the case of ordinary people, haste generally implies hurry. And it will never do to become involved in a mode of life which implies a constant breathless pushing on. It must be a horrible thing to go through life in a hurry. It is highly expedient for all, it is absolutely necessary for most men, that they should have occasional leisure. Many enjoyments—perhaps all the tranquil and enduring enjoyments of life—cannot be felt except in leisure. And the best products of the human mind and heart can be brought forth only in leisure. Little does he know of the calm, unexciting, unwearying, lasting satisfaction of life, who has never known what it is to place the leisurely hand in the idle pocket, and to saunter to and fro. Mind, I utterly despise the idler—the loafer, as Yankees term him, who never does anything—whose idle hands are always in his idle pockets, and who is always sauntering to and fro. Leisure, be it remembered, is the intermission of labour; it is the blink of idleness in the life of a hard-working man. It is only in the case of such a man that leisure is dignified, commendable, or enjoyable. But to him it is all these, and more. Let us not be ever driving on. The machinery, physical and mental, will not stand it. It is fit that one should occasionally sit down on a grassy bank, and look listlessly, for a long time, at the daisies around, and watch the patches of bright-blue sky through green leaves overhead. It is right to rest on a large stone by the margin of a river; to rest there on a summer day for a

long time, and to watch the lapse of the water as it passes away, and to listen to its silvery ripple over the pebbles. Who but a blockhead will think you idle? Of course blockheads may; but you and I, my reader, do not care a rush for the opinion of blockheads. It is fit that a man should have time to chase his little children about the green, to make a kite and occasionally fly it, to rig a ship and occasionally sail it, for the happiness of those little folk. There is nothing unbecoming in making your Newfoundland dog go into the water to bring out sticks, nor in teaching a lesser dog to stand on his hinder legs. No doubt Goldsmith was combining leisure with work when Reynolds one day visited him; but it was leisure that aided the work. The painter entered the poet's room unnoticed. The poet was seated at his desk, with his pen in his hand, and with his paper before him; but he had turned away from *The Traveller*, and with uplifted hand was looking towards a corner of the room, where a little dog sat with difficulty on his haunches, with imploring eyes. Reynolds looked over the poet's shoulder, and read a couplet whose ink was still wet:—

By sports like these are all their cares beguiled;
The sports of children satisfy the child.

Surely, my friend, you will never again read that couplet, so simply and felicitously expressed, without remembering the circumstances in which it was written. Who should know better than Goldsmith what simple pleasures 'satisfy the child?'

It is fit that a busy man should occasionally be able to stand for a quarter of an hour by the drag of his friend Smith; and walk round the horses, and smooth

down their fore-legs, and pull their ears, and drink in their general aspect, and enjoy the rich colour of their bay coats gleaming in the sunshine; and minutely and critically inspect the drag, its painting, its cushions, its fur robes, its steps, its spokes, its silver caps, its lamps, its entire expression. These are enjoyments that last, and that cannot be had save in leisure. They are calm and innocent; they do not at all quicken the pulse, or fever the brain; it is a good sign of a man if he feels them as enjoyments; it shows that he has not indurated his moral palate by appliances highly spiced with the cayenne of excitement, all of which border on vice, and most of which imply it.

Let it be remembered, in the praise of leisure, that only in leisure will the human mind yield many of its best products. Calm views, sound thoughts, healthful feelings, do not originate in a hurry or a fever. I do not forget the wild geniuses who wrote some of the finest English tragedies — men like Christopher Marlowe, Ford, Massinger, Dekker, and Otway. No doubt *they* lived in a whirl of wild excitement, yet they turned off many fine and immortal thoughts. But their thought was essentially morbid, and their feeling hectic: all their views of life and things were unsound. And the beauty with which their writings are flushed all over, is like the beauty that dwells in the brow too transparent, the cheek too rosy, and the eye too bright, of a fair girl dying of decline. It is entirely a hot-house thing, and away from the bracing atmosphere of reality and truth. Its sweetness palls, its beauty frightens; its fierce passion and its wild despair are the things in which it is at home. I do not believe the stories which are told about Jeffrey scribbling off his articles while dressing for a ball, or after re-

turning from one at four in the morning : the fact is, nothing good for much was ever produced in that jaunty, hasty fashion, which is suggested by such a phrase as *scribbled off*. Good ideas flash in a moment on the mind : but they are very crude then ; and they must be mellowed and matured by time and in leisure. It is pure nonsense to say that the *Poetry of the Anti-jacobin* was produced by a lot of young men sitting over their wine, very much excited, and talking very loud, and two or three at a time. Some happy impromptu hits may have been elicited by that mental friction ; but, rely upon it, the *Needy Knife-Grinder*, and the song whose chorus is *Niversity of Gottingen*, were composed when their author was entirely alone, and had plenty of time for thinking. Brougham is an exception to all rules : he certainly did write his *Discourse of Natural Theology* while rent asunder by all the multifarious engagements of a Lord Chancellor ; but, after all, a great deal that Brougham has done exhibits merely the smartness of a sort of intellectual legerdemain ; and that celebrated *Discourse*, so far as I remember it, is remarkably poor stuff. I am now talking not of great geniuses, but of ordinary men of education, when I maintain that to the labourer whose work is mental, and especially to the man whose work it is to write, leisure is a pure necessary of intellectual existence. There must be long seasons of quiescence between the occasional efforts of production. An electric eel cannot always be giving off shocks. The shock is powerful, but short, and then long time is needful to rally for another. A field, however good its soil, will not grow wheat year after year. Such a crop exhausts the soil : it is a strain to produce it ; and after it the field must lie fallow for a while, — it must have leisure, in

short. So is it with the mind. Who does not know that various literary electric eels, by repeating their shocks too frequently, have come at last to give off an electric result which is but the faintest and washiest echo of the thrilling and startling ones of earlier days? *Festus* was a strong and unmistakable shock; *The Angel World* was much weaker; *The Mystic* was extremely weak; and *The Age* was twaddle. Why did the author let himself down in such a fashion? The writer of *Festus* was a grand, mysterious image in many youthful minds: dark, wonderful, not quite comprehensible. The writer of *The Age* is a smart but silly little fellow, whom we could readily slap upon the back and tell him he had rather made a fool of himself. And who does not feel how weak the successive shocks of Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Dickens are growing? The former, especially, strikes out nothing new. Anything good in his recent productions is just the old thing, with the colours a good deal washed out, and with salt which has lost its savour. Poor stuff comes of constantly cutting and cropping. The potatoes of the mind grow small; the intellectual wheat comes to have no ears; the moral turnips are infected with the finger and toe disease. The mind is a reservoir which can be emptied in a much shorter time than it is possible to fill it. It fills through an infinity of little tubes, many so small as to act by capillary attraction. But in writing a book, or even an article, it empties as through a twelve-inch pipe. It is to me quite wonderful that most of the sermons one hears are so good as they are, considering the unintermittent stream in which most preachers are compelled to produce them. I have sometimes thought, in listening to the discourse of a really thoughtful and able clergyman — If you, my friend, had to write a ser-

mon once a month instead of once a week, how very admirable it would be!

Some stupid people are afraid of confessing that they ever have leisure. They wish to palm off upon the human race the delusion that they, the stupid people, are always hard at work. They are afraid of being thought idle unless they maintain this fiction. I have known clergymen who would not on any account take any recreation in their own parishes, lest they should be deemed lazy. They would not fish, they would not ride, they would not garden, they would never be seen leaning upon a gate, and far less carving their name upon a tree. What absurd folly! They might just as well have pretended that they did without sleep, or without food, as without leisure. You cannot always drive the machine at its full speed. I know, indeed, that the machine may be so driven for two or three years at the beginning of a man's professional life; and that it is possible for a man to go on for such a period with hardly any appreciable leisure at all. But it knocks up the machine: it wears it out: and after an attack or two of nervous fever, we learn what we should have known from the beginning, that a far larger amount of tangible work will be accomplished by regular exertion of moderate degree and continuance, than by going ahead in the feverish and unrestful fashion in which really earnest men are so ready to begin their task. It seems, indeed, to be the rule rather than the exception, that clergymen should break down in strength and spirits in about three years after entering the church. Some die: but happily a larger number get well again, and for the remainder of their days work at

a more reasonable rate. As for the sermons written in that feverish stage of life, what crude and extravagant things they are : stirring and striking, perhaps, but hectic and forced, and entirely devoid of the repose, reality, and daylight feeling of actual life and fact. Yet how many good, injudicious people, are ever ready to expect of the new curate or rector an amount of work which man cannot do ; and to express their disappointment if that work is not done ! It is so very easy to map out a task which you are not to do yourself : and you feel so little wearied by the toils of other men ! As for you, my young friend, beginning your parochial life, don't be ill-pleased with the kindly-meant advice of one who speaks from the experience of a good many years, and who has himself known all that you feel, and foolishly done all that you are now disposed to do. Consider for how many hours of the day you can labour, without injury to body or mind : labour faithfully for those hours, and for no more. Never mind about what may be said by Miss Limejuice and Mr. Snarling. They will find fault at any rate ; and you will mind less about their fault-finding, if you have an unimpaired digestion, and unaffected lungs, and an unenlarged heart. Don't pretend that you are always working : it would be a sin against God and Nature if you were. Say frankly, *There is a certain amount of work that I can do ; and that I will do : but I must have my hours of leisure.* I must have them for the sake of my parishioners as well as for my own ; for leisure is an essential part of that mental discipline which will enable my mind to grow and turn off sound instruction for their benefit. Leisure is a necessary part of true life ; and if I am to live at all, I must have it. Surely it is a thousand times better

candidly and manfully to take up *that* ground, than to take recreation on the sly, as though you were ashamed of being found out in it, and to disguise your leisure as though it were a sin. I heartily despise the clergyman who reads *Adam Bede* secretly in his study, and when any one comes in, pops the volume into his waste-paper basket. An innocent thing is wrong to you if you think it wrong, remember. I am sorry for the man who is quite ashamed if any one finds him chasing his little children about the green before his house, or standing looking at a bank of primroses or a bed of violets, or a high wall covered with ivy. Don't give in to that feeling for one second. You are doing right in doing all that; and no one but an ignorant, stupid, malicious, little-minded, vulgar, contemptible blockhead will think you are doing wrong. On a sunny day, you are not idle if you sit down and look for an hour at the ivied wall, or at an apple-tree in blossom, or at the river gliding by. You are not idle if you walk about your garden, noticing the progress and enjoying the beauty and fragrance of each individual rose-tree on such a charming June day as this. You are not idle if you sit down upon a garden seat, and take your little boy upon your knee, and talk with him about the many little matters which give interest to his little life. You are doing something which may help to establish a bond between you closer than that of blood; and the estranging interests of after years may need it all. And you do not know, even as regards the work (if of composition) at which you are busy, what good ideas and impulses may come of the quiet time of looking at the ivy, or the blossoms, or the stream, or your child's sunny curls. Such things often start thoughts which might seem a hundred miles away

from them. That they do so, is a fact to which the experience of numbers of busy and thoughtful men can testify. Various thick skulls may think the statement mystical and incomprehensible: for the sake of such let me confirm it by high authority. Is it not curious, by the way, that in talking to some men and women, if you state a view a little beyond their mark, you will find them doubting and disbelieving it so long as they regard it as resting upon your own authority; but if you can quote anything that sounds like it from any printed book, or even newspaper, no matter how little worthy the author of the article or book may be, you will find the view received with respect, if not with credence? The mere fact of its having been printed, gives any opinion whatsoever much weight with some folk. And your opinion is esteemed as if of greater value, if you can only show that any human being agreed with you in entertaining it. So, my friend, if Mr. Snarling thinks it a delusion that you may gain some thoughts and feelings of value, in the passive contemplation of nature, inform him that the following lines were written by one Wordsworth, a stamp-distributor in Cumberland, regarded by many competent judges as a very wise man:—

Why, William, on that old grey stone,
 Thus for the length of half a day,
 Why, William, sit you thus alone,
 And dream your time away?

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
 When life was sweet, I knew not why,
 To me my good friend Matthew spake,
 And thus I made reply:

The eye,—it cannot choose but see;
 We cannot bid the ear be still:

Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are Powers,
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours,
In a wise passiveness.

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum,
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away!

Such an opinion is sound and just. Not that I believe that instead of sending a lad to Eton and Oxford, it would be expedient to make him sit down on a grey stone, by the side of any lake or river, and wait till wisdom came to him through the gentle teaching of nature. The instruction to be thus obtained must be supplementary to a good education, college and professional, obtained in the usual way; and it must be sought in intervals of leisure, intercalated in a busy and energetic life. But thus intervening, and coming to supplement other training, I believe it will serve ends of the most valuable kind, and elicit from the mind the very best material which is there to be elicited. Some people say they work best under pressure: De Quincey, in a recent volume, declares that the conviction that he *must* produce a certain amount of writing in a limited time has often seemed to open new cells in his brain, rich in excellent thought; and I have known preachers (very poor ones) declare that their best sermons were written

after dinner on Saturday. As for the sermons, the best were bad; as for De Quincey, he is a wonderful man. Let us have elbow-room, say I, when we have to write anything! Let there be plenty of time, as well as plenty of space. Who could write if cramped up in that chamber of torture, called *Little Ease*, in which a man could neither sit, stand, nor lie, but in a constrained fashion? And just as bad is it to be cramped up into three days, when to stretch one's self demands at least six. Do you think Wordsworth could have written against time? Or that *In Memoriam* was penned in a hurry?

Said Miss Limejuice, I saw Mr. Swetter, the new rector, to-day. Ah! she added, with a malicious smile, I fear he is growing idle already, though he has not been in the parish six months. I saw him, at a quarter before two precisely, standing at his gate with his hands in his pockets. I observed that he looked for three minutes over the gate into the clover-field he has got. And then Smith drove up in his drag, and stopped and got out; and he and the rector entered into conversation, evidently about the horses, for I saw Mr. Swetter walk round them several times, and rub down their fore-legs. Now I think he should have been busy writing his sermon, or visiting his sick. Such, let me assure the incredulous reader, are the words which I have myself heard Miss Limejuice, and her mother, old Mrs. Snarling Limejuice, utter more than once or twice. Knowing the rector well, and knowing how he portions out his day, let me explain to those candid individuals the state of facts. At ten o'clock precisely, having previously gone to the stable and walked round the garden, Mr. Swetter sat down at his desk in his study and worked

hard till one. At two he is to ride up the parish to see various sick persons among the cottagers. But from one to two he has laid his work aside, and tried to banish all thought of his work. During that period he has been running about the green with his little boy, and even rolling upon the grass; and he has likewise strung together a number of daisies on a thread, which you might have seen round little Charlie's neck if you had looked sharply. He has been unbending his mind, you see, and enjoying leisure after his work. It is entirely true that he did look into the clover-field and enjoy the fragrance of it, which you probably regard as a piece of sinful self-indulgence. And his friend coming up, it is likewise certain that he examined his horses (a new pair) with much interest and minuteness. Let me add, that only contemptible humbugs will think the less of him for all this. The days are past in which the ideal clergyman was an emaciated eremite, who hardly knew a cow from a horse, and was quite incapable of sympathizing with his humbler parishioners in their little country cares. And some little knowledge as to horses and cows, not to mention potatoes and turnips, is a most valuable attainment to the country parson. If his parishioners find that he is entirely ignorant of those matters which they understand best, they will not unnaturally draw the conclusion that he knows nothing. While if they find that he is fairly acquainted with those things which they themselves understand, they will conclude that he knows everything. Helplessness and ignorance appear contemptible to simple folk, though the helplessness should appear in the lack of power to manage a horse, and the ignorance in a man's not knowing the way in which potatoes are planted. To you, Miss Limejuice, let me further say a word as to

your parish clergyman. Mr. Swetter, you probably do not know, was Senior Wrangler at Cambridge. He chose his present mode of life, not merely because he felt a special leaning to the sacred profession, though he did feel that strongly ; but also because he saw that in the Church, and in the care of a quiet rural parish, he might hope to combine the faithful discharge of his duty with the enjoyment of leisure for thought ; he might be of use in his generation without being engaged to that degree that, like some great barristers, he should grow a stranger to his children. He concluded that it is one great happiness of a country parson's life, that he may work hard without working feverishly ; he may do his duty, yet not bring on an early paralytic stroke. Swetter might, if he had liked, have gone in for the Great Seal ; the man who was second to him will probably get it ; but he did not choose. Do you not remember how Baron Alderson, who might well have aspired at being a Chief Justice or a Lord Chancellor, fairly decided that the prize was not worth the cost, and was content to turn aside from the worry of the bar into the comparative leisure of a puisne judgeship ? It was not worth his while, he rightly considered, to run the risk of working himself to death, or to live for years in a breathless hurry. No doubt the man who thus judges must be content to see others seize the great prizes of human affairs. Hot and trembling hands, for the most part, grasp these. And how many work breathlessly, and give up the tranquil enjoyment of life, yet never grasp them after all !

There is no period at which the feeling of leisure is a more delightful one, than during breakfast and after breakfast on a beautiful summer morning in the country

It is a stavisish and painful thing to know that instantly you rise from the breakfast-table you must take to your work. And in that case your mind will be fretting and worrying away all the time that the hurried meal lasts. But it is delightful to be able to breakfast leisurely ; to read over your letters twice ; to skim the *Times*, just to see if there is anything particular in it (the serious reading of it being deferred till later in the day) ; and then to go out and saunter about the garden, taking an interest in whatever operations may be going on there ; to walk down to the little bridge and sit on the parapet, and look over at the water foaming through below ; to give your dogs a swim ; to sketch out the rudimentary outline of a kite, to be completed in the evening ; to stick up, amid shrieks of excitement and delight, a new coloured picture in the nursery ; to go out to the stable and look about there ;—and to do all this with the sense that there is no neglect, that you can easily overtake your day's work notwithstanding. For this end the country human being should breakfast early ; not later than nine o'clock. Breakfast will be over by half-past nine ; and the half hour till ten is as much as it is safe to give to leisure, without running the risk of dissipating the mind too much for steady application to work. After ten one does not feel comfortable in idling about, on a common working-day. You feel that you ought to be at your task ; and he who would enjoy country leisure must beware of fretting the fine mechanism of his moral perceptions by doing anything which he thinks even in the least degree wrong.

And here, after thinking of the preliminary half hour of leisure before you sit down to your work, let me advise that when you fairly go at your work, if of composi-

tion, you should go at it leisurely. I do not mean that you should work with half a will, with a wandering attention, with a mind running away upon something else. What I mean is, that you should beware of flying at your task, and keeping at it, with such a stretch, that every fibre in your body and your mind is on the strain, is tense and tightened up; so that when you stop, after your two or three hours at it, you feel quite shattered and exhausted. A great many men, especially those of a nervous and sanguine temperament, write at too high a pressure. They have a hundred and twenty pounds on the square inch. Every nerve is like the string of Robin Hood's bow. All this does no good. It does not appreciably affect the quality of the article manufactured, nor does it much accelerate the rate of production. But it wears a man out awfully. It sucks him like an orange. It leaves him a discharged Leyden jar, a torpedo entirely used up. You have got to walk ten miles. You do it at the rate of four miles an hour. You accomplish the distance in two hours and a half; and you come in, not extremely done up. But another day, with the same walk before you, you put on extra steam, and walk at four and a half miles an hour, perhaps at five. (*Mem. : People who say they walk six miles an hour are talking nonsense. It cannot be done, unless by a trained pedestrian.*) You are on a painful stretch all the journey; you save, after all, a very few minutes; and you get to your journey's end entirely knocked up. Like an over-driven horse, you are off your feed; and you can do nothing useful all the evening. I am well aware that the good advice contained in this paragraph will not have the least effect on those who read it. *Fungar inani munere.* I know how little all this goes for with an individual

now not far away. And, indeed, no one can say that because two men have produced the same result in work accomplished, therefore they have gone through the same amount of exertion. Nor am I now thinking of the vast differences between men in point of intellectual power. I am content to suppose that they shall be, intellectually, precisely on a level: yet one shall go at his work with a painful, heavy strain; and another shall get through his lightly, airily, as if it were pastime. One shall leave off fresh and buoyant; the other, jaded, languid, aching all over. And in this respect, it is probable that if your natural constitution is not such as to enable you to work hard, yet leisurely, there is no use in advising you to take things easily. Ah, my poor friend, you cannot! But at least you may restrict yourself from going at any task on end, and keeping yourself ever on the fret until it is fairly finished. Set yourself a fitting task for each day; and on no account exceed it. There are men who have a morbid eagerness to get through any work on which they are engaged. They would almost wish to go right on through all the toils of life and be done with them; and then, like Alexander, 'sit down and rest.' The prospect of anything yet to do, appears to render the enjoyment of present repose impossible. There can be no more unhealthful state of mind. The day will never come when we shall have got through our work: and well for us that it never will. Why disturb the quiet of to-night, by thinking of the toils of to-morrow? There is deep wisdom, and accurate knowledge of human nature, in the advice, given by the Soundest and Kindest of all advisers, and applicable in a hundred cases, to 'Take no thought for the morrow.'

It appears to me, that in these days of hurried life, a

great and valuable end is served by a class of things which all men of late have taken to abusing, — to wit, the extensive class of dull, heavy, uninteresting, good, sensible, pious sermons. They afford many educated men almost their only intervals of waking leisure. You are in a cool, quiet, solemn place: the sermon is going forward: you have a general impression that you are listening to many good advices and important doctrines, and the entire result upon your mind is beneficial; and at the same time there is nothing in the least striking or startling to destroy the sense of leisure, or to painfully arouse the attention and quicken the pulse. Neither is there a syllable that can jar on the most fastidious taste. All points and corners of thought are rounded off. The entire composition is in the highest degree gentlemanly, scholarly, correct; but you feel that it is quite impossible to attend to it. And you do not attend to it; but at the same time, you do not quite turn your attention to anything else. Now, you remember how a dying father, once upon a time, besought his prodigal son to spend an hour daily in solitary thought: and what a beneficial result followed. The dull sermon may serve an end as desirable. In church you are alone, in the sense of being isolated from all companions, or from the possibility of holding communication with anybody; and the wearisome sermon, if utterly useless otherwise, is useful in giving a man time to think, in circumstances which will generally dispose him to think seriously. There is a restful feeling, too, for which you are the better. It is a fine thing to feel that church is a place where, if even for two hours only, you are quite free from worldly business and cares. You know that all these are waiting for you outside: but at least you are free from their actual endur-

ance here. I am persuaded, and I am happy to entertain the persuasion, that men are often much the better for being present during the preaching of sermons to which they pay very little attention. Only some such belief as this could make one think, without much sorrow, of the thousands of discourses which are preached every Sunday over Britain, and of the class of ears and memories to which they are given. You see that country congregation coming out of that ivy-covered church in that beautiful churchyard. Look at their faces, the ploughmen, the dairy-maids, the drain-diggers, the stable-boys: what could *they* do towards taking in the gist of that well-reasoned, scholarly, elegant piece of composition which has occupied the last half-hour? Why, they could not understand a sentence of it. Yet it has done them good. The general effect is wholesome. They have got a little push, they have felt themselves floating on a gentle current, going in the right direction. Only enthusiastic young divines expect the mass of their congregation to do all they exhort them to do. You must advise a man to do a thing a hundred times, probably, before you can get him to do it once. You know that a breeze, blowing at thirty-five miles an hour, does very well if it carries a large ship along in its own direction at the rate of eight. And even so, the practice of your hearers, though truly influenced by what you say to them, lags tremendously behind the rate of your preaching. Be content, my friend, if you can maintain a movement, sure though slow, in the right way. And don't get angry with your rural flock on Sundays, if you often see on their blank faces, while you are preaching, the evidence that they are not taking in a word you say. And don't be entirely discouraged. You may be doing them good for all that.

And if you do good at all, you know better than to grumble, though you may not be doing it in the fashion that you would like best. I have known men, accustomed to sit quiet, pensive, half-attentive, under the sermons of an easy-going but orthodox preacher, who felt quite indignant when they went to a church where their attention was kept on the stretch all the time the sermon lasted, whether they would or no. They felt that this intrusive interest about the discourse, compelling them to attend, was of the nature of an assault, and of an unjustifiable infraction of the liberty of the subject. Their feeling was, 'What earthly right has that man to make us listen to his sermon, without getting our consent? We go to church to rest: and lo! he compels us to listen!'

I do not forget, musing in the shade this beautiful summer day, that there may be cases in which leisure is very much to be avoided. To some men, constant occupation is a thing that stands between them and utter wretchedness. You remember the poor man, whose story is so touchingly told by Borrow in *The Romany Rye*, who lost his wife, his children, all his friends, by a rapid succession of strokes; and who declared that he would have gone mad if he had not resolutely set himself to the study of the Chinese language. Only constant labour of mind could 'keep the misery out of his head.' And years afterwards, if he paused from toil for even a few hours, the misery returned. The poor fisherman in *The Antiquary* was wrong in his philosophy, when Mr. Oldbuck found him, with trembling hands, trying to repair his battered boat the day after his son was buried. 'It's weel wi' you gentles,' he said, 'that can sit in the house wi' handkerchers at your een, when ye lose a freend; but the like o' us maun to our wark again, if our hearts were beating as

hard as my hammer!’ We love the kindly sympathy that made Sir Walter write the words: but bitter as may be the effort with which the poor man takes to his heartless task again, surely he will all the sooner get over his sorrow. And it is with gentles, who can ‘sit in the house’ as long as they like, that the great grief longest lingers. There is a wonderful efficacy in enforced work to tide one over every sort of trial. I saw not long since a number of pictures, admirably sketched, which had been sent to his family in England by an emigrant son in Canada, and which represented scenes in daily life there among the remote settlers. And I was very much struck with the sad expression which the faces of the emigrants always wore, whenever they were represented in repose or inaction. I felt sure that those pensive faces set forth a sorrowful fact. Lying on a great bluff, looking down upon a lovely river; or seated at the tent-door on a Sunday, when his task was laid apart;—however the backwoodsman was depicted, if not in energetic action, there was always a very sad look upon the rough face. And it was a peculiar sadness—not like that which human beings would feel amid the scenes and friends of their youth: a look pensive, distant, full of remembrance, devoid of hope. You glanced at it, and you thought of Lord Eglintoun’s truthful lines:—

From the lone shieling on the misty island,
Mountains divide us, and a world of seas:
But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
— And we in dreams behold the Hebrides:
Fair these broad meads, these hoary woods are grand,—
But we are exiles from our fathers’ land!

And you felt that much leisure will not suit *there*. Therefore, you stout backwoodsman, go at the huge tor

est-tree : rain upon it the blows of your axe, as long as you can stand ; watch the fragments as they fly ; and jump briskly out of the way as the reeling giant falls : — for all this brisk exertion will stand between you and remembrances that would unman you. There is nothing very philosophical in the plan, to ‘dance sad thoughts away,’ which I remember as the chorus of some Canadian song. I doubt whether that peculiar specific will do much good. But you may *work* sad thoughts away ; you may crowd morbid feelings out of your mind by stout daylight toils ; and remember that sad remembrances, too long indulged, tend strongly to the maudlin. Even Werter was little better than a fool ; and a contemptible fool was Mr. Augustus Moddle.

How many of man’s best works take for granted that the majority of cultivated persons, capable of enjoying them, shall have leisure in which to do so. The architect, the artist, the landscape-gardener, the poet, spend their pains in producing that which can never touch the hurried man. I really feel that I act unkindly by the man who did that elaborate picking-out in the painting of a railway carriage, if I rush upon the platform at the last moment, pitch in my luggage, sit down and take to the *Times*, without ever having noticed whether the colour of the carriage is brown or blue. There seems a dumb pleading eloquence about even the accurate diagonal arrangement of the little woollen tufts in the morocco cushions, and the interlaced network above one’s head, where umbrellas go, as though they said, ‘We are made thus neatly to be looked at, but we cannot make you look at us unless you choose ; and half the people who come into the carriage are so hurried that they

never notice us.' And when I have seen a fine church-spire, rich in graceful ornament, rising up by the side of a city street, where hurried crowds are always passing by, not one in a thousand ever casting a glance at the beautiful object, I have thought, Now surely you are not doing what your designer intended! When he spent so much of time, and thought, and pains in planning and executing all those beauties of detail, surely he intended them to be looked at; and not merely looked at in their general effect, but followed and traced into their lesser graces. But he wrongly fancied that men would have time for that; he forgot that, except on the solitary artistic visitor, all he has done would be lost, through the nineteenth century's want of leisure. And you, architect of Melrose, when you designed that exquisite tracery, and decorated so perfectly that flying buttress, were you content to do so for the pleasure of knowing you did your work thoroughly and well; or did you count on its producing on the minds of men in after-ages an impression which a prevailing hurry has prevented from being produced, save perhaps in one case in a thousand? And you, old monk, who spent half your life in writing and illuminating that magnificent Missal; was your work its own reward in the pleasure its execution gave you; or did you actually fancy that mortal man would have time or patience — leisure, in short — to examine in detail all that you have done, and that interested you so much, and kept you eagerly engaged for so many hours together, on days the world has left four hundred years behind? I declare it touches me to look at that laborious appeal to men with countless hours to spare: men, in short, hardly now to be found in Britain. No doubt, all this is the old story: for how great a part of the higher and finer

human work is done in the hope that it will produce an effect which it never will produce, and attract the interest of those who will never notice it ! Still, the ancient missal-writer pleased himself with the thought of the admiration of skilled observers in days to come ; and so the fancy served its purpose.

Thus, at intervals through that bright summer day, did the writer muse at leisure in the shade ; and note down the thoughts (such as they are) which you have here at length in this essay. 'The sun was still warm and cheerful when he quitted the lawn ; but somehow, looking back upon that day, the colours of the scene are paler than the fact, and the sunbeams feel comparatively chill. For memory cannot bring back things freshly as they lived, but only their faded images. Faces in the distant past look wan ; voices sound thin and distant ; the landscape round is uncertain and shadowy. Do you not feel somehow, when you look back on ages forty centuries ago, as if people then spoke in whispers and lived in twilight ?



CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THE WORRIES OF LIFE, AND HOW TO MEET THEM.

BUT now to my proper task. I have certain suggestions to offer *Concerning the Worries of Life and How to Meet them*. I am quite aware that the reader of a metaphysical turn, after he has read my essay, may be disposed to find fault with its title. The plan which is to be advocated for the treatment of the *Worries of Life*, can only in a modified sense be described as *Meeting them*. You cannot be said to face a thing on which you turn your back. You cannot accurately be described as meeting a man whom you walk away from. You do not, in strictness, regard a thing in any mode or fashion, which you do not regard at all. But, after intense reflection, I could devise no title that set out my subject so well as the present: and so here it is. Perfection is not generally attainable in human doings. It is enough if things are so, that they *will do*. No doubt this is no excuse for not making them as good as one can. But the fact is, as you get older, you seldom have time to write down any plausible excuse, before you see a crushing answer to it. The man who has thought longest, comes back to the point at which the man stands who has hardly thought at all. He feels, more deeply year by

year, the truth of the grand axiom, that *Much may be said on Both Sides*.

Now, my reader, you shall have, in a very brief space, the essence of my Theory as to the treatment of Human Worry.

Let us picture to ourselves a man, living in a pleasant home, in the midst of a beautiful country. Pleasing scenes are all around him, wherever he can look. There are evergreens and grass: fields and hedgerows: hills and streams; in the distance, the sea; and somewhat nearer, the smoke of a little country town. Now, what would you think of this man, if he utterly refused to look at the cheerful and beautiful prospects which everywhere invite his eye; and spent the whole day gazing intently at the dunghill, and hanging over the pigsty? And all this though his taste were not so peculiar as to lead him to take any pleasure in the contemplation of the pigsty or the dunghill; all this, though he had a more than ordinary dislike to contemplate pigsties or dunghills? No doubt, you would say the man is a monomaniac.

And yet, my reader, don't you know (possibly from your own experience) that in the moral world many men and women do a thing precisely analogous, without ever being suspected of insanity? Don't you know that multitudes of human beings turn away from the many blessings of their lot, and dwell and brood upon its worries? Don't you know that multitudes persistently look away from the numerous pleasant things they might contemplate, and look fixedly and almost constantly at painful and disagreeable things? You sit down, my friend, in your snug library, beside the evening fire. The blast without is hardly heard through the drawn curtains. Your wife is there, and your two grown-up daughters

You feel thankful that after the bustle of the day, you have this quiet retreat where you may rest, and refit yourself for another day with its bustle. But the conversation goes on. Nothing is talked of but the failings of the servants and the idleness and impudence of your boys; unless indeed it be the supercilious bow with which Mrs. Snooks that afternoon passed your wife, and the fact that the pleasant dinner-party at which you assisted the evening before at Mr. Smith's, has been ascertained to have been one of a second-chop character, his more honoured guests having dined on the previous day. Every petty disagreeable in your lot, in short, is brought out, turned ingeniously in every possible light, and aggravated and exaggerated to the highest degree. The natural and necessary result follows. An hour, or less, of this discipline brings all parties to a sulky and snappish frame of mind. And instead of the cheerful and thankful mood in which you were disposed to be when you sat down, you find that your whole moral nature is jarred and out of gear. And your wife, your daughters, and yourself, pass into moody, sullen silence, over your books — books which you are not likely for this evening to much appreciate or enjoy. Now, I put it to every sensible reader, whether there be not a great deal too much of this kind of thing. Are there not families that never spend a quiet evening together, without embittering it by raking up every unpleasant subject in their lot and history? There are folk who, both in their own case and that of others, seem to find a strange satisfaction in sticking the thorn in the hand farther in: even in twisting the dagger in the heart. Their lot has its innumerable blessings, but they will not look at these. Let the view around in a hundred directions be ever so

charming, they cannot be got to turn their mental view in one of these. They persist in keeping nose and eyes at the moral pigsty.

Oh, what a blessing it would be if we human beings could turn away our mind's eye at will, as we can our physical! As we can turn away from an ugly view in the material world, and look at a pleasing one; if we could but do the like in the world of mind! As you turn your back on a dunghill, or a foul stagnant ditch: if you could so turn your back on your servants' errors, on your children's faults, on the times when you made a fool of yourself, on the occasions when sad disappointment came your way, — in short, upon those prospects which are painful to look back upon! You go to bed, I may assume, every evening. How often, my friend, have you tossed about there, hour after hour, sleepless and fevered, stung by care, sorrow, worry: as your memory persisted in bringing up again a thousand circumstances which you could wish for ever forgot: as each sad hour and sad fact came up and stuck its little sting into your heart! I do not suppose that you have led a specially wicked life; I do not write for blackguards; I suppose your life has been innocent on the whole, and your lot prosperous: — I assume no more than the average of petty vexations, mortifications, and worries. You remember how that noble man, Sir Charles Napier, tells us in his *Diary*, that sometimes, when irritated by having discovered some more than usually infamous job or neglect, or stung by a keener than ordinary sense of the rascally injustice which pursued him through life, he tossed about all night in a half-frantic state, shouting, praying, and blaspheming. Now, whether you be a great man or a little man, when you lay your head on your

thorny pillow, have you not longed oftentimes for the power of resolutely turning the mind's eye in another direction than that which it was so miserable a thing for you to contemplate? We all know, of course, how some, when the mind grew into that persistent habit of looking in only one direction, of harbouring only one wretched thought, which is of the essence of madness, have thought, as they could not turn away the mind's eye at will, to blindfold the mind (so to speak) altogether: to make sure that it should see nothing at all. By opium, by strong drink, men have endeavoured to reduce the mind to pure stupefaction, as their sole chance of peace. And you know too, kindly reader, that even such means have sometimes failed of their sorrowful purpose; and that men have madly flung off the burden of this life, as though thus they could fling off the burden of self and of remembrance.

I have said that it would be an unspeakable blessing if we could as easily turn the eyes away from a moral as from a physical pigsty; and in my belief we may, to a great degree, train ourselves to such a habit. You see, from what I have just said, that I do not think the thing is always or entirely to be done. The only way to forget a thing is to cease to feel any interest in it; and we cannot cheat ourselves into the belief that we feel no interest in a thing which we intensely desire to forget. But though the painful thing do not, at our will, quite die away into nothing, still we may habituate ourselves to look away from it. Only time can make our vexations and worries fade into nothing, though we are looking at them: even as only distance in space can make the pigsty disappear, if we retire from it still looking in its direction. But we may turn our back on the pigsty, and

so cease to behold it though it be close at hand. And in like manner, we may get our mind so under control, that in ordinary cases it will answer the rein. We may acquire, by long-continued effort, the power to turn our back upon the worry — that is, in unmetaphoric language, to think of something else.

I have often occasion to converse with poor people about their little worries, their cares and trials; and from the ingenious way in which they put them, so as to make them look their very worst, it is sometimes easy to see that the poor man or woman has been brooding for long hours over the painful thing, turning it in all different ways, till the thing has been got into that precise point of view in which it looks its very ugliest. It is like one of those gutta-percha heads, squeezed into its most hideous grin. And I have thought, how long this poor soul must have persisted in looking at nothing but this dreary prospect before finding out so accurately the spot whence it looks most dreary. I might mention one or two amusing instances; but I do not think it would be fair to give the facts, and I could not invent any parallel cases unless by being myself painfully worried. And we all know that, apart from other reasons, it is impolitic to look too long at a disagreeable object, for this reason — that all subjects, pleasing or painful, greatness on our view if we look at them long. They grow much bigger. You can hardly write a sermon (writing it as carefully and well as you can) without being persuaded before you have done with it, that the doctrine or duty you are seeking to enforce is one of the very highest possible importance. You feel this incomparably more strongly when you have finished your discourse than you did when you began it. So with an essay or an article. Half

in jest, you choose your subject; half earnestly, you sketched out your plan; but as you carefully write it out, it begins to grow upon you that it would be well for the human race would it but listen to your advice and act upon it. It is so also with our worries, so with all the ills of our lot, so especially with any treachery or injustice with which we may have been treated. You may brood over a little worry till, like the prophet's cloud, it passes from being of the size of a man's hand into something that blackens all the sky, from the horizon to the zenith. You may dwell upon the cruelty and treachery with which you have been used, till the thought of them stings you almost to madness. Who but must feel for the abandoned wife, treated unquestionably with scandalous barbarity, who broods over her wrongs till she can think of nothing else, and can hardly speak or write without attacking her unworthy husband? You may, in a moral sense, look at the pigsty or the open sewer till, wherever you look, you shall see nothing save open sewers and pigsties. You may dwell so long on your own care and sorrow, that you shall see only care and sorrow everywhere. Now, don't give in to that if you can help it.

Some one has used you ill — cheated you, misrepresented you. An ugly old woman, partially deaf, and with a remarkably husky voice, has come to your house without any invitation, and notwithstanding the most frigid reception which civility will permit, persists in staying for ten days. You overhear Mr. Snarling informing a stranger that your essays in *Fraser* are mainly characterized by conceit and ill-nature (Mr. Snarling, put on the cap). Your wife and you enter a drawing-room to make a forenoon visit. Miss Limejuice is staying at the house.

Your friend, Mr. Smith, drove you down in his drag, which is a remarkably handsome turn-out. And entering the drawing-room somewhat faster than was expected, you surprise Miss Limejuice, still with a malignant grin on her extraordinarily ugly countenance, telegraphing across the room to the lady of the house to come and look at the carriage. In an instant the malignant grin is exchanged for a fawning smile, but not so quickly but that you saw the malignant grin. A man has gone to law with you about a point which appears to you perfectly clear. Now, don't sit down and think over and over again these petty provocations. Exclude them from your mind. Most of them are really too contemptible to be thought of. The noble machinery of your mind, though you be only a commonplace good-hearted mortal, was made for something better than to grind that wretched grist. And as for greater injuries, don't think of them more than you can help. You will make yourself miserable. You will think the man who cheated or misrepresented you an incarnate demon, while probably he is in the main not so bad, though possessed of an unhappy disposition to tell lies to the prejudice of his acquaintance. Remember that if you could see his conduct, and your own conduct, from his point of view, you might see that there is much to be said even for him. No matter how wrong a man is, he may be able to persuade himself into the honest belief that he is in the right. You may kill an apostle, and think you are doing God service. You may vilify a curate, who is more popular than yourself; and in the process of vilification, you may quote much Scripture and shed many tears. Very, very few offenders see their offence in the precise light in which you do while you condemn it. So resolve that in any complicated case, in

which misapprehension is possible; in all cases in which you cannot convict a man of direct falsehood; you shall give him credit for honesty of intention. And as to all these petty offences which have been named — as to most petty mortifications and disappointments — why, turn your back on them. Turn away from the contemplation of Mr. Snarling's criticism as you would turn away from a little stagnant puddle to look at fairer sights. Look in the opposite direction from all Miss Limejuice's doings and sayings, as you would look in the opposite direction from the sole untidy corner of the garden, where the rotten pea-sticks are. As for the graver sorrow, try and think of it no more. Learn its lesson indeed; God sent it to teach you something and to train you somehow; but then try and think of it no more.

But there are mortals who are always raking up unpleasant subjects, because they have a real delight in them. Like the morbid anatomist, they would rather look at a diseased body than a healthy one. Well, in the case of their own lot, let such be indulged. At first, when you find them every time you see them, beginning again the tedious story of all their discomforts and worries, you are disposed to pity them, tedious and uninteresting though the story of their slights and grievances be. Do not throw away pity upon such. They are not suitable objects of charity. They have a real though perverted enjoyment in going over that weary narration. It makes them happy to tell at length how miserable they are. They would rather look at the pigsty than not. Let them. It is all quite right. But unhappily such people, not content themselves to contemplate pigsties, generally are anxious to get their acquaintances to contemplate *their* pigsties too, and as their acquaintances, in

most instances, would rather look at a clover-field than a pigsty, such people become companions of the most disagreeable sort. As you are sitting on a fine summer evening on the grass before your door, tranquil, content, full of thankful enjoyment, they are fond (so to speak) of suddenly bringing in a scavenger's cart, and placing it before you, where it will blot out all the pleasant prospect. They will not let you forget the silly thing you said or did, the painful passage in your life on which you wish to shut down the leaf for ever. They are always probing the half-healed wound, sticking the knife into the sensitive place. If the view in a hundred directions is beautiful, they will, by instant affinity and necessity of nature, beg you to look at the dunghill, and place the dunghill before you for that purpose. I believe there are many able, sensitive men, who never had a fair chance in life. Their powers have been crippled, their views embittered, their whole nature soured, by a constant discipline of petty whips and scourges, and little pricking needles, applied (in some cases through pure stolidity and coarseness of nature) by an ill-mated wife. It is only by flying from their own fireside that they can escape the unceasing gadfly, with its petty, irritating, never-ending sting. They live in an atmosphere of pigsty. They cannot lift their eyes but some ugly, petty, contemptible wrong is sure to be crammed upon their aching gaze. And it must be a very sweet and noble nature that years of this training will not embitter. It must be a very great mind that years of this training will fail to render inconceivably petty and little. Oh! woful and miserable to meet a man of fifty or sixty, an educated man, who in this world of great interests and solemn anticipations, can find no subjects to talk of but the neglect

of his wealthy neighbour, the extortionate price he is charged for sugar, the carelessness of his man-servant, the flirtations of his maid-servants, the stiffness of Lord Dunderhead when he lately met that empty-pated peer. In what a petty world such a man lives! Under what a low sky he walks: how muggy the atmosphere he breathes!

You remember Mr. Croaker, in Goldsmith's *Goodnatured Man*. Whenever he saw a number of people cheerful and happy, he always contrived to throw a chill and damp over the circle by wishing, with a ghastly air, that they might all be as well that day six months. I have known many Croakers. I have known men who, if they saw a young fellow quite happy in his lot and his work, hopeful and hearty, would instantly try to suggest something that might make him unhappy; that might pull him down to a congenial gloom. I have known persons who, if they had looked upon a gay circle of sweet, lively girls, rosy and smiling, would have enjoyed extremely to have (in a moral sense) suddenly brought into that fair circle a hearse and a coffin. And I have been filled with fiery indignation, when I knew that such persons, really acting from malignant spite and bitterness to see others happy, would probably have claimed to be acting from religious motives, and doing a Christian duty. The very foundation, and primary axiom, in some men's religious belief, is, that Almighty God is spitefully angry to see His creatures happy. Oh what a wicked, mischievous lie! God is love. And we know it on the highest of all authorities, that the very first and grandest duty He claims of His creatures, is to love Him with heart and soul and strength and mind; not to shrink before Him, like whipped slaves before a capricious, sulky tyrant; but

to love Him and trust to Him as loving children might gather at the kindest parent's knee. I am content to look at a pigsty when needful: God intends that we should oftentimes look at such in the moral world; but God intends that we should look at clover-fields and fragrant flowers whenever we can do so without a dereliction of duty. I am quite sure that when the Blessed Redeemer went to the marriage at Cana of Galilee, he did not think it his duty to cast a gloom and a damp over the festive company there. Do not misunderstand me, my spiteful acquaintance. There is a time to mourn, as well as a time to dance; and in this life we shall have quite enough of the former time, without seeking for supererogatory woes. I am not afraid, myself, to look upon the recent grave; I would train my children to sit upon the daisied mound, pensive, but not afraid, as I told them that Christianity has turned the *sepulchrum* into the *κοιμητήριον*, — the *burying-place* into the *sleeping-place*; as I told them how the Christian dead do but sleep for the Great Awaking. But I should not think it right to break in upon their innocent cheer by rushing in and telling them that their coffin would soon be coming, and that their grave was waiting in the churchyard. There are times enough and events enough which will tell them that. Don't let us have Mr. Croaker. And don't let us fancy that by making ourselves miserable, we are doing something pleasing to God. It is not His purpose that we should look at pigsties when we can honestly help it. No doubt, the erroneous belief that God wishes that we should, runs through all religions. India, Persia, Arabia, have known it, no less than Rome, England, Scotland; the fakir, the eremite, the monk, the Covenanter, have erred together here. The Church of England, and

the Church of Scotland, are no more free from the tendency to it, than the Church of Rome; and the grim Puritan, who thought it sinful to smile, was just as far wrong as the starved monastic and the fleshless Brahmin. Every now and then, I preach a sermon against this notion; not that people now-a-days will actually scourge and starve themselves; but that they carry with them an inveterate belief that it would be a fine thing if they did. Here is the conclusion of the last sermon; various friendly readers of *Fraser* have sent me fancy specimens of bits of my discourses, let them compare their notion of them with the fact:—

It shows how all men, everywhere, have been pressed by a common sense of guilt against God, which they thought to expiate by self-inflicted punishment. But we, my friends, know better than *that*. Jesus died for us; Jesus suffered for us; *His* sufferings took away our sins, our own sufferings, how great soever, never could; Christ's sacrifice was all-sufficient; and any penance on our part is just as needless as it would be unavailing. Take, then, brethren, without a scruple or a misgiving, the innocent enjoyment of life. Let your heart beat, gladly and thankfully, by your quiet fireside; and never dream that there is anything of sinful self-indulgence in that pure delight with which you watch your children's sports, and hear their prattle. Look out upon green spring fields and blossoms, upon summer woods and streams; gladden in the bright sunshine, as well as muse in the softening twilight; and never fancy that though these things cheer you amid the many cares of life, you are falling short of the ideal sketched by that kindly Teacher of self-denial who said, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily!'

Having relieved my feelings by thus stating my resolute protest against what I think one of the most mischievous and wicked errors I ever knew, I proceed to say that although I think nothing can be more foolish than to be always looking at moral pigsties, still the principle cannot be laid down without some restriction. You

may, by indulging the disposition to look away from unpleasant prospects, bring your mind to a morbid state: you may become so over-sensitive, that you shall shrink away from the very thought of injustice, cruelty, or suffering. I do not suppose selfishness. I am not talking to selfish, heartless persons, who can look on with entire composure at suffering of any sort, provided it do not touch themselves. I am quite content that such should endure all that may befall them, and more. The heart of some men is like an extremely tough beef-steak, which needs an immense deal of beating before it will grow tender. The analogy does not hold entirely; for I believe the very toughest steak may be beaten till it grows tender; or at least the beating will not make it tougher. Whereas the human heart is such, that while in generous natures it learns, by suffering, to feel for the suffering of others, in selfish and sordid natures it becomes only the more selfish and self-contained the more it is called to feel. But I am not speaking to selfish persons. I am thinking of generous, sensitive human beings, to whom the contemplation of injustice and cruelty and falsehood is as painful when these are pressing upon others, as when they are pressing upon themselves. I am thinking of men and women who feel their hearts quicken and their cheeks flush when they read the stupid and unjust verdicts of occasional (must I say frequent?) juries; and the preposterous decisions of London police magistrates now and then. To such, I well believe, the daily reading of the law report in the *Times* is a painful worry; it sets before one so sad a picture of human sin and folly; and it shows so strongly that human laws labour most vainly to redress the greater part of the evils that press on human life. You remember how once Byron, at Ven-

ice, durst not open the *Quarterly Review*; and sent it away after it had been several days in his house, ignorant even whether it contained any notice of him. Of course this was a purely selfish shrinking; the poet knew that his nature would so wince under the dreaded attack, that he was afraid even to ascertain whether there were any attack at all. Have not you, my reader, from a morbid though more generous sensitiveness, sometimes shrunk from opening the newspaper which day by day reported some iniquitous court-martial, some scandalous trial in the Ecclesiastical Court, revealing human depravity in its foulest manifestation, and setting out and pressing upon your view evils which were practically remediless? And so, thinking of such things, I wish to qualify my great principle, that in the moral world it is wise and right to turn your back upon the pigsty, where practicable. I have thought of two limitations of this principle. The first limitation is this; that however painful it may be to look at unpleasant things, we ought fairly to face them so long as there is any hope of remedying them. The second limitation is this; that however painful it may be to look at unpleasant things, we ought not to train ourselves, by constantly refusing to look at them, to a morbidly shrinking habit of mind. Such a habit, by indulgence, will grow upon us to that degree, that it will unfit us for the rude wear of life. And the moral nature, grown sensitive as the mimosa, will serve as a conductor to convey many a wretched and debilitating pang to the heart.

Let us think of these two limitations of my theory as to the fashion in which the worries of life should be met.

Though it is wise, generally speaking, to look away from painful sights, it is not wise or right to do so while,

by facing them, we may hope to mend them. It is not good, like a certain priest and Levite of ancient times, to turn our back on the poor man lying half dead by the way-side; while it is still possible for a Good Samaritan to pour in oil and wine. However unpleasing the sight, however painful the effort, let us look fairly at the worry in our lot, till we have done our best to put it right. It is not the act of wisdom, it is the doing of indolence, selfishness, and cowardice, to turn our back on that which we may remedy or even alleviate by facing it. It is only when no good can come of brooding over the pigsty that I counsel the reader persistently to turn away from it. Many men try to forget some family vexation, some neglected duty, some social or political grievance, when they ought manfully to look full at it, to see it in its true dimensions and colours, and to try to mend matters. They cannot truly forget the painful fact. Even when it is not distinctly remembered, a vague, dull, unhappy sense of something amiss will go with them everywhere — all the more unhappy because conscience will tell them they are doing wrong. It is so in small matters as well as great. Your bookcase is all in confusion; the papers in your drawers have got into a sad mess. It is easier, you think, to shut the doors, to lock the drawers, to go away and think of something else, than manfully to face the pigsty and sort it up. Possibly you may do so. If you are a nerveless, cowardly being, you will; but you will not be comfortable though you have turned your back on the pigsty: a gnawing consciousness of the pigsty's existence will go with you wherever you go. Say your affairs have become embarrassed; you are living beyond your means; you are afraid to add up your accounts and ascertain

how you stand. Ah, my friend, many a poor man well knows the feeling! Don't give in to it. Fairly face the fact: know the worst. Many a starving widow and orphan, many a pinched family reduced from opulence to sordid shifts, have suffered because the dead father would not while he lived face the truth in regard to his means and affairs! Let not that selfish being quote my essay in support of the course he takes. However complicated and miserable the state of the facts may be — though the pigsty should be like the Augean stable — look fairly at it; see it in its length and breadth; cut off your dinner-parties, sell your horses, kick out the fellows who make a hotel of your house and an ordinary of your table; bring your establishment to what your means can reach, to what will leave enough to insure your life. Don't let your miserable children have to think bitterly of you in your grave. And another respect in which you ought to carry out the same resolute purpose to look the pigsty full in the face is, in regard to your religious views and belief. Don't turn your back upon your doctrinal doubts and difficulties. Go up to them and examine them. Perhaps the ghastly object which looks to you in the twilight like a sheeted ghost, may prove to be no more than a tablecloth hanging upon a hedge; but if you were to pass it distantly without ascertaining what it is, you might carry the shuddering belief that you had seen a disembodied spirit all your days. Some people (very wrongly, as I think) would have you turn the key upon your sceptical difficulties, and look away from the pigsty altogether. From a stupid though prevalent delusion as to the meaning of *Faith*, they have a vague impression that the less ground you have for your belief, and the more

objections you stoutly refuse to see, the more faith you have got. It is a poor theory, that of some worthy divines; it amounts to just this: Christianity is true, and it is proved true by evidence; but for any sake don't examine the evidence, for the more you examine it the less likely you are to believe it. I say, No! Let us see your difficulties and objections; only to define them will cut them down to half their present vague, misty dimensions. I am not afraid of them; for though, after all is said, they continue to be difficulties, I shall show you that difficulties a hundredfold greater stand in the way of the contrary belief; and it is just by weighing opposing difficulties that you can in this world come to any belief, scientific, historical, moral, political. Let me say here that I heartily despise the man who professes a vague scepticism on the strength of difficulties which he has never taken the pains fairly to measure. It is hypocritical pretence when a man professes at the same instant to turn his back upon a prospect, and to be guided by what he discerns in that prospect. But there are men who would like to combine black with white, yes with no. There are men who are always anxious to combine the contradictory enterprises, *How to do a thing* and *How at the same time not to do it*.

In brief, my limitation is this: Do not refuse to admit distressing thoughts, if any good is to come of admitting them; do not turn your back on the ugly prospect, so long as there is a hope of mending it; don't be like the wrecked sailor, who drinks himself into insensibility, while a hope of rescue remains; don't refuse to worry yourself by thinking what is to become of your children after you are gone, if there be still time to devise some means of providing for them. Look fairly

at the blackest view, and go at it bravely if there be the faintest chance of making it brighter.

And, in truth, a great many bad things prove to be not so bad when you fairly look at them. The day seems horribly rainy and stormy when you look out of your library-window; but you wrap up and go out resolutely for a walk, and the day is not so bad. By the time your brisk five miles are finished, you think it rather a fine breezy day, healthful though boisterous. All remediable evils are made a great deal worse by turning your back on them. The skeleton in the closet rattles its bare bones abominably, when you lock the closet-door. Your disorderly drawer of letters and papers was a bugbear for weeks, because you put off sorting it and tried to forget it. It made you unhappy — vaguely uneasy, as all neglected duties do; yet you thought the trouble of putting it right would be so great that you would rather bear the little gnawing uneasiness. At length you could stand it no more. You determined some day to go at your task and do it. You did it. It was done speedily; it was done easily. You felt a blessed sense of relief, and you wondered that you had made such a painful worry of a thing so simple. By the make of the universe every duty deferred grows in bulk and weight and painful pressure.

It may here be said that when a worry cannot be forgotten, and yet cannot be mended, it is a good thing to try to define it. Measure its exact size. That is sure to make it look smaller. I have great confidence in the power of the pen to give most people clearer ideas than they would have without it. You have a vague sense that in your lot there is a vast number of worries and annoyances. Just sit down, take a large

sheet of paper and a pen, and write out a list of all your annoyances and worries. You will be surprised to find how few they are, and how small they look. And if on another sheet of paper you make a list of all the blessings you enjoy, I believe that in most cases you will see reason to feel heartily ashamed of your previous state of discontent. Even should the catalogue of worries not be a brief one, still the killing thing—the vague sense of indefinite magnitude and number—will be gone. Almost all numbers diminish by accurately counting them. A clergyman may honestly believe that there are five hundred people in his church; but unless he be a person accustomed accurately to estimate numbers, you will find on counting that his congregation does not exceed two hundred and fifty. When the Chartist petition was presented to Parliament some years ago, it was said to bear the signatures of five or six millions of people. It looked such an immense mass that possibly its promoters were honest in promulgating that belief. But the names were counted, and they amounted to no more than a million and a half. So, thoughtful reader, who fancy yourself torn by a howling pack of worries, count them. You will find them much fewer than you had thought; and the only way to satisfactorily count them is by making a list of them in writing.

Yet here there is a difficulty too. The purpose for which I advise you to make such a list, is to assure yourself that your worries are really not so very many or so very great. But there is hardly any means in this world which may not be worked to the opposite of the contemplated end. And by writing out and dwelling on the list of your worries, you may make them worse.

You may diminish their number, but increase their intensity. You may set out the relations and tendencies of the vexations under which you suffer, of the ill usage of which you complain, till you whip yourself up to a point of violent indignation. In reading the life of Sir Charles Napier, I think one often sees cause to lament that the great man so chronicled and dwelt upon the petty injustices which he met with from petty men. And when a poor governess writes the story of her indignities, recording them with painful accuracy, and putting them in the most unpleasing light, one feels that it would have been better had she not taken up the pen. But indeed these are instances coming under the general principle set out some time since, that irremediable uries are for the most part better forgotten.

So much for the first limitation of my theory for the treatment of worries. The second, you remember, is, that we ought not to give in to the impulse to turn our back upon the ugly prospect to such a degree that any painful sight or thought shall be felt like a mortal stab. You may come to that point of morbid sensitiveness. And I believe that the greatest evil of an extremely retired country life is, that it tends to bring one to that painfully shrinking state. You may be afraid to read the *Times*, for the suffering caused you by the contemplation of the irremediable sin and misery of which you read the daily record there. You may come to wish that you could creep away into some quiet corner, where the uproar of human guilt and wretchedness should never be heard again. You may come to sympathize heartily with the weary aspiration of the Psalmist, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove: then would I flee away and be at rest!' Sometimes as you stand in your stable,

smoothing down your horse's neck, you may think how quiet and silent a place it is, how free from worry, and wish you had never to go out of the stall. Or when you have been for two or three days ill in bed, the days going on and going down so strangely, you may have thought that you would stay there for the remainder of your life; that you could not muster resolution to set yourself again to the daily worry. You people who cannot understand the state of feeling which I am trying to describe, be thankful for it: but do not doubt that such a state of feeling exists in many minds.

Let me confess, for myself, that for several years past I have been afraid to read a good novel. It is intensely painful to contemplate and realize to one's mind the state of matters set out in most writings of the class. Apart from the question of not caring for that order of thought (and to me dissertation is much more interesting than narrative), don't you shrink from the sight of struggling virtue and triumphant vice, of cruelty, oppression, and successful falsehood? Give us the story that has no exciting action; that moves along without incident transcending the experience of ordinary human beings; that shows us quiet, simple, innocent modes of life, free from the intrusion of the stormy and wicked world around. Don't you begin, as you grow older, to sympathize with that feeling of the poet Beattie, which when younger you laughed at, that Shakspeare's admixture of the grotesque in his serious plays was absolutely necessary to prevent the tragic part from producing an effect too painful for endurance? The poet maintained that Shakspeare was aiming to save those who might witness his plays from a 'disordered head or a broken heart.' You see there, doubtless, the working of a morbid ner

vous system ; but there is a substratum of truth. Once upon a time, when a man was worried by the evils of his lot, he could hope to escape from them by getting into the world of fiction. But now much fiction is such that you are worse there than ever. I do not think of the grand, romantic, and tremendously melodramatic incidents which one sometimes finds ; these do not greatly pain us, because we feel both characters and incidents to be so thoroughly unreal. I do not mind a bit when the hero of *Monte Christo* is flung into the sea in a sack from a cliff some hundreds of feet high ; that pains one no more than the straits and misfortunes of *Munchausen*. The wearing thing is to be carried into homely scenes, and shown life-like characters, bearing and struggling with the worries of life we know so well. We are reminded, only too vividly, of the hard strife of reduced gentility to keep up appearances, of the aging, life-wearing battle with constant care. It is as much wear of heart to look into that picture truthfully set before us by a man or woman of genius, as to look at the sad reality of this world of struggle, privation, and failure. It was just the sight of these that we wished to escape ; and lo ! there they are again. So one shrinks from the sympathetic reading of a story too truthfully sad. I once read *Vanity Fair*. I would not read it again on any account, any more than one would willingly go through the delirium of a fever, or revive distinctly the circumstances of the occasion on which one acted like a fool. The story was admirable, incomparable ; but it was too sadly true. We see quite enough of that sort of thing in actual life : let us not have it again when we seek relief from the realities of actual life. Once you get into a sunshiny atmosphere

when you began to read a work of fiction ; or if the light was lurid, it was manifestly the glare of some preparation of sulphur in a scene-shifter's hand. But now, you are often in a doleful grey from the beginning of a story to its end.

It is a great blessing when a man's nature or training is such that he is able to turn away entirely from his work when he desists from actual working, and to shut his eyes to the contemplation of any painful thing when its contemplation ceases to be necessary or useful. There is much in this of native idiosyncrasy, but a good deal may be done by discipline. You may to a certain extent acquire the power to throw off from the mind the burden that is weighing upon it, at all times except the moment during which the burden has actually to be borne. I envy the man who stops his work and instantly forgets it till it is time to begin again. I envy the man who can lay down his pen while writing on some subject that demands all his mental stretch, and go out for a walk, and yet not through all his walk be wrestling with his subject still. Oh ! if we could lay down the mind's load as we can lay down the body's ! If the mind could sit down and rest for a breathing space, as the body can in climbing a hill ! If, as we decidedly stop walking when we cease to walk, we could cease thinking when we intend to cease to think ! It was doubtless a great secret of the work which Napoleon did with so little apparent wear, that he could fall asleep whenever he chose. Yet even he could not at will look away from the pigsty : no doubt one suddenly pressed itself upon his view on that day when he was sitting alone at dinner, and in a moment sprang up with a furious execration, and kicked over the table, smash-

ing his plates as drunken Scotch weavers sometimes do. Let us do our best to right the wrong; but when we have done our best, and go to something else, let us quite forget the wrong: it will do no good to remember it now. It is long-continued wear that kills. We can do and bear a vast deal if we have blinks of intermission of bearing and doing. But the mind of some men is on the stretch from the moment they begin a task till they end it. Slightly and rapidly as you may run over this essay, it was never half-an-hour out of the writer's waking thoughts from the writing of the first line to the writing of the last. I have known those who, when busied with any work, legal, literary, theological, parochial, domestic, hardly ever consciously ceased from it; but were, as Mr. Bailey has expressed it, 'about it, lashing at it day and night.' The swell continued though the wind had gone down; the wheels spun round though the steam was shut off. Let me say here (I say it for myself), that apart entirely from any consideration of the religious sanctions which hallow a certain day of the seven, it appears to me that its value is literally and really inestimable to the overworked and worried man, if it be kept sacred, not merely from worldly work, but from the intrusion of worldly cares and thoughts. The thing can be done, my friend. As the last hour of Saturday strikes, the burden may fall from the mind: the pack of worries may be whipped off; and you may feel that you have entered on a purer, freer, happier life, which will last for four-and-twenty hours. I am a Scotchman, and a Scotch clergyman, and I hold views regarding the Sunday with which I know that some of my most esteemed readers do not sympathize; but I believe, for myself, that a strict resolution to preserve the Lord's day

sacred (in no Puritanical sense), would lengthen many a valuable life; would preserve the spring of many a noble mind; would hold off in some cases the approaches of imbecility or insanity.

I do not forget, in urging the expediency of training the mind to turn away from worries which it will do no good to continue to look at, that anything evil or painful has a peculiar power to attract and compel attention to it. A little bad thing bulks larger on the mind's view than a big good thing. It persistently pushes its ugly face upon our notice. You cannot forget that you have bad toothache, though it be only one little nerve that is in torment, and all the rest of the body is at ease. And some little deformity of person, some little worry in your domestic arrangements, keeps always intruding itself, and defying you to forget or overlook it. If the pigsty already referred to be placed in the middle of the pretty lawn before your door, it will blot out all the landscape: you will see nothing save the pigsty. Evil has the advantage of good in many ways. It not merely detracts from good: it neutralizes it all. I think it is Paley who says that the evils of life supply no just argument against the divine benevolence; inasmuch as when weighed against the blessings of life, the latter turn the scale. It is as if you gave a man five hundred a-year, and then took away from him one hundred: this would amount virtually to giving him a clear four hundred a-year. It always struck me that the ease put is not analogous to the fact. The four hundred a-year left would lose no part of their marketable value when the one hundred was taken away. The fact is rather as if you gave a man a large jug of pure water, and then cast into it a few drops of black

draught. That little infusion of senna would render the entire water nauseous. No doubt there might be fifty times as much pure water as vile senna: but the vile senna would spoil the whole. Even such is the influence of evil in this system of things. It does not simply diminish the quantity of good to be enjoyed: to a great degree it destroys the enjoyment of the whole of the good. Good carries weight in the race with evil. It has not a fair start, nor a fair field. Don't you know, reader, that it needs careful, constant training to give a child a good education; and possibly you may not succeed in giving the good education after all: while no care at all suffices to give a bad education; and a bad education is generally successful. So in the physical world. No field runs to wheat. If a farmer wants a crop of good grain, he must work hard to get it. But he has only to neglect his field and do nothing, and he will have weeds enough. The whole system of things in this world tends in favour of evil rather than of good. But happily, my friend, we know the reason why. And we know that a day is coming which will set these things right.

I trust I have made sufficiently plain the precise error against which this essay is directed. The thing with which I find fault is that querulous, discontented, unhappy disposition which sits down and broods over disagreeables and worries: not with the view of mending them, nor of bracing the moral nature by the sight of them: but simply for the sake of harping upon that tedious string; — of making yourself miserable, and making all who come near you miserable too. There are people into whose houses you cannot go, without being sickened by the long catalogue of all their slights and worries. It is

a wretched and contemptible thing to be always hawking about one's griefs, in the hope of exciting commiseration. Let people be assured that their best friends will grow wearied of hearing of their worries: let people be assured that the pity which is accorded them will be in most cases mingled with something of contempt. There are men and women who have a wonderful scent for a grievance. If you are showing them your garden, and there be one untidy corner, they will go straight to that, and point it out with mournful elation, and forget all the rest of the trim expanse. If there be one mortifying circumstance in an otherwise successful and happy lot, they will be always reminding you of that. You write a book. Twenty favourable reviews of it appear, and two unfavourable: Mr. Snarling arrives after breakfast, sure as fate, with the two unfavourable reviews in his pocket. You are cheerful and contented with your lot and your house: Mr. Snarling never misses an opportunity of pointing out to you the dulness of your situation, the inconvenience of your dwelling, the inferiority of the place you hold in life to what you might *à priori* have anticipated. You are quite light-hearted when Mr. Snarling enters; but when he goes, you cannot help feeling a good deal depressed. The blackest side of things has been pressed on your notice during his stay. I do not think this is entirely the result of malice. It is ignorance of the right way to face little worries. The man has got a habit of looking only at the dunghill. Would that he could learn better sense!

Let me here remark a certain confusion which exists in the minds of many. I have known persons who prided themselves on their ability to inflict pain on others. They

thought it a proof of power. And no doubt to scarify a man as Luther and Milton did, as Croker, Lockhart, and Macaulay did, is a proof of power. But sometimes people inflict pain on others simply by making themselves disgusting; and to do this is no proof of power. No doubt you may severely pain a refined and cultivated man or woman by revolting vulgarity of language and manner. You may, Mrs. Bouncer, embitter your poor governess's life by your coarse, petty tyranny; and you may infuriate your servants by talking at them before strangers at table. But let me remind you that there is a dignified and an undignified way of inflicting pain. There are what may be called the Active and the Passive ways. You may inflict annoyance as a viper does; or you may inflict annoyance as a dunghill does. Some men (sharp critics belong to this class) are like the viper. They actively give pain. You are afraid of *them*. Others, again, are like a dunghill. They are merely passively offensive. You are disgusted at these. Now the viperish man may perhaps be proud of his power of stinging: but the dunghill man has no reason earthly to be proud of his power of stinking. It is just that he is an offensive object, and men would rather get out of his way. Yet I have heard a blockhead boast how he had driven away a refined gentleman from a certain club. No doubt he did. The gentleman could never go there without the blockhead offensively revolting him. The blockhead told the story with pride. Other blockheads listened, and expressed their admiration of his cleverness. I looked in the blockhead's face, and inwardly said, Oh you human dunghill! Think of a filthy sewer boasting, 'Ah, I can drive most people away from *me*!'

To the dunghill class many men belong. Such, gen-

erally, are those who will never heartily say anything pleasant ; but who are always ready to drop hints of what they think will be disagreeable for you to hear. Such are the men who will walk round your garden, when you show it to them in the innocent pride of your heart : and after having accomplished the circuit, will shrug their shoulders, snuff the air, and say nothing. Such are the men who will call upon an old gentleman, and incidentally mention that they were present the other Sunday when his son preached his first sermon, but say no kindly word as to the figure made by the youthful divine. Such are the men who, when you show them your fine new church, will walk round it hurriedly, say carelessly, ‘ Very nice ; ’ and begin to talk earnestly upon topics not connected with ecclesiastical architecture. And such, as a general rule, are all the envious race, who will never cordially praise anything done by others, and who turn green with envy and jealousy if they even hear others speak of a third party in words of cordial praise. Such men are for the most part under-bred, and always of third or fourth-rate talent. A really able man heartily speaks well of the talent that rivals or eclipses his own. He does so through the necessity of a noble and magnanimous nature. And a gentleman will generally do as much, through the influence of a training which makes the best of the best features in the character of man. It warms one’s heart to hear a great and illustrious author speak of a young one who is struggling up the slope. But it is a sorry thing to hear Mr. Snarling upon the same subject.

I have sometimes wondered whether what is commonly called *coolness* in human beings is the result of a remarkable power of looking away from things which it is not

thought desirable to see ; or of a still more remarkable power of looking at disagreeable things and not minding. You remember somewhere in the *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, we are told of a certain joyous dinner-party at his house in Castle-street. Of all the gay party there was none so gay as a certain West Country baronet. Yet in his pocket he had a letter containing a challenge which he had accepted ; and next morning early he was off to the duel in which he was killed. Now, there must have been a woful worry gnawing at the clever man's heart, you would say. How did he take it so coolly ? Did he really forget for the time the risk that lay before him ? Or did he look fairly at it, yet not care ? He was a kind-hearted man as well as a brave one : surely he must have been able, through the jovial evening, to look quite away from the possibility of a distracted widow, and young children left fatherless. Sometimes this coolness appears in base and sordid forms : it is then the result of obtuseness of nature, — of pure lack of discernment and feeling. People thus qualified are able with entire composure to do things which others could not do to save their lives. Such are the people who constitute a class which is an insufferable nuisance of civilized society, — the class of uninvited and unwelcome guests. I am thinking of people who will without any invitation push themselves and their baggage into the house of a man who is almost a stranger to them ; and in spite of the studied presentation of the cold shoulder, and in spite of every civil hint that their presenee is most unwelcome, make themselves quite at home for so long as it suits them to remain. I have heard of people who would come, to the number of three or four, to the house of a poor gentleman to whom every shilling was a consideration ; and

without invitation remain for four, six, ten weeks at a stretch. I have heard of people who would not only come uninvited to stay at a small house, but bring with them some ugly individual whom its host had never seen: and possibly a mangy dog in addition. And such folk will with great freedom drink the wine, little used by that plain household, and hospitably press the ugly individual to drink it freely too. I declare there is something that approaches the sublime in the intensity of such folk's stolidity. They *will not* see that they are not wanted. They jauntily make themselves quite at home. If they get so many weeks' board and lodging, they don't care how unpleasantly it is given. They will write for your carriage to meet them at the railway station, as if they were ordering a hackney-coach. This subject, however, is too large to be taken up here: it must have an entire essay to itself. But probably my reader will agree with me in thinking that people may possess in an excessive degree the valuable power of looking away from what they don't wish to see.

And yet — and yet — do you not feel that it is merely by turning our mind's eye away from many thoughts which are only too intrusive, that you can hope to enjoy much peace or quiet in such a world as this? How could you feel any relish for the comforts of your own cheerful lot if you did not forget the wretchedness, anxiety, and want which enter into the pinched and poverty-stricken lot of others? You do not like, when you lay yourself down at night on your quiet bed, to think of the poor wretch in the condemned cell of the town five miles off who will meet his violent death to-morrow in the dismal drizzling dawn. Some, I verily believe, will not sympa-

alize with the feeling. There are persons, I believe, who could go on quite comfortably with their dinner with a starving beggar standing outside the window and watching each morsel they ate with famished eyes. Perhaps there are some who would enjoy their dinner all the better; and to that class would belong (if indeed he be not a pure, dense, unmitigated, unimprovable blockhead, who did not understand or feel the force of what he said) that man who lately preached a sermon in which he stated that a great part of the happiness of heaven would consist in looking down complacently on the torments of hell, and enjoying the contrast! What an idea must that man have had of the vile, heartless selfishness of a soul in bliss! No. For myself, though holding humbly all that the Church believes and the Bible teaches, I say that if there be a mystery hard of explanation, it is how the happy spirit can be happy even *There*, though missing from its side those who in this life were dearest. You remember the sublime prayer of Aquinas—a prayer for Satan himself. You remember the gush of kindness which made Burns express a like sorrow even for the dark Father of Evil: ‘I’m wae to think upon your den, Even for your sake!’ No. The day *may* come when it will not grieve us to contemplate misery which is intolerable and irremediable; but this will be because we shall then have gained such clear and right views of all things, that we shall see things as they appear to God, and then doubtless see that all He does is right. But we may be well assured that it will not be the selfish satisfaction of contrasting our own happiness with that misery which will enable us to contemplate it with complacency: it will be a humble submission of our own will to the One Will that is always wise and right. Yet you remember, reader, how one of

the profoundest and acutest of living theologians is fain to have recourse, in the case of this saddest of all sad thoughts, to the same relief which I have counselled for life's little worries — oh how little when we think of this ! Archbishop Whately, in treating of this great difficulty, suggests the idea that in a higher state the soul may have the power of as decidedly turning the thoughts away from a painful subject as we now have of turning the eyes away from a disagreeable sight.

I thought of these things this afternoon in a gay and stirring scene. It was a frozen lake of considerable extent, lying in a beautiful valley, at the foot of a majestic hill. The lake was covered with people, all in a state of high enjoyment : scores of skaters were flying about, and there was a roaring of curling-stones like the distant thunder that was heard by Rip van Winkle. The sky was blue and sunshiny ; the air crisp and clear ; the cliffs, slopes, and fields around were fair with untrodden snow ; but still one could not quite exclude the recollection that this brisk frost, so bracing and exhilarating to us, is the cause of great suffering to multitudes. The frost causes most outdoor work to cease. No building, no fieldwork, can go forward, and so the frost cuts off the bread from many hungry mouths ; and fireless rooms and thin garments are no defence against this bitter chill. Well, you would never be cheerful at all but for the blessed gift of occasional forgetfulness ! Those who have seen things too accurately as they are, have always been sorrowful even when unsoured men. Here, you man (one of six or seven eager parties with chairs and gimlets), put on my skates. Don't bore that hole in the heel of the boot too deep ; you may penetrate to something

more sensitive than leather. Screw in ; buckle the straps, but not too tight : and now we are on our feet, with the delightful sense of freedom to fly about in any direction with almost the smooth swiftness of a bird. Come, my friend, let us be off round the lake, with long strokes, steadily, and not too fast. We may not be quite like Sidney's Arcadian shepherd-boy, piping as if he never would grow old ; yet let us be like kindly skaters, forgetting, in the exhilarating exercise that quickens the pulse and flushes the cheek, that there are such things as evil and worry in this world !



CHAPTER XI.

CONCERNING GIVING UP AND COMING DOWN.

NOT so very much depends upon a beginning after all. The inexperienced writer racks his brain for something striking to set out with. He is anxious to make a good impression at first. He fancies that unless you hook your reader by your first sentence, your reader will break away; making up his mind that what you have got to say is not worth the reading. Now it cannot be doubted that a preacher, who is desirous of keeping his congregation in that dead silence and fixedness of attention which one sometimes sees in church, must, as a general rule, produce that audible hush by his first sentence if he is to produce it at all. If people in church are permitted for even one minute at the beginning of the sermon to settle themselves, bodily and mentally, into the attitude of inattention, and of thinking of something other than the preacher's words, the preacher will hardly catch them up again. He will hardly, by any amount of earnestness, eloquence, pointedness, or oddity, gain that universal and sympathetic interest of which he flung away his chance by some long, involved, indirect, and dull sentence at starting. But the writer is not tried by so exacting a standard. Most readers will glance over the first few pages of a book before throwing it aside as stupid. The writer may

overcome the evil effect of a first sentence, or even a first paragraph, which may have been awkward, ugly, dull — yea silly. I could name several very popular works which set out in a most unpromising way. I particularly dislike the first sentence of *Adam Bede*, but it is redeemed by hundreds of noble ones. It is not certain that the express train which is to devour the four hundred miles between London and Edinburgh in ten hours, shall run its first hundred yards much faster than the lagging parliamentary. There can be no question that the man whom all first visitants of the House of Commons are most eager to see and hear is Mr. Disraeli. He is the lord of debate; not unrivalled perhaps, but certainly unsurpassed. Yet everybody knows he made a very poor beginning. In short, my reader, if something that is really good is to follow, a bad outset may be excused.

One readily believes what one wishes to believe; and I wish to hold by this principle. For I have accumulated many thoughts *Concerning Giving Up and Coming Down*; and I have got them lying upon this table, noted down on six long slips of paper. I vainly fancy that I have certain true and useful things to say; but I have experienced extraordinary difficulty in deciding how I should begin to say them. I have sat this morning by the fireside for an hour, looking intently at the glowing coals; but though I could think of many things to say about the middle of my essay, I could think of nothing satisfactory with which to begin it. But comfort came as the thought gradually developed itself, that it really mattered very little how the essay might be begun, provided it went on; and, above all, ended. A dull beginning will probably be excused to the essayist more readily than to the writer whose sole purpose is to amuse. The essayist

pleases himself with the belief that his readers are by several degrees more intelligent and thoughtful than the ordinary readers of ordinary novels; and that many of them, if they find thoughts which are just and practical, will regard as a secondary matter the order in which these thoughts come. The sheep's head of northern cookery has not, at the first glance, an attractive aspect: nor is the nutriment it affords very symmetrically arranged: but still, as Dr. John Brown has beautifully remarked, it supplies a deal of *fine confused feeding*. I look at my six pieces of paper, closely written over in a very small hand. They seem to me as the sheep's head. There is feeding *there*, albeit somewhat confused. It matters not much where we shall begin. Come, my friendly reader, and partake of the homely fare.

The great lesson which the wise and true man is learning through life, is, how to COME DOWN without GIVING UP. Reckless and foolish people confuse these two things. It is far easier to give up than to come down, it is far less repugnant to our natural self-conceit. It befits much better our natural laziness. It enables us to fancy ourselves heroic, when in truth we are vain, slothful, and fretful. I have not words to express my belief on this matter so strongly as I feel it. Oh! I venerate the man who with a heart unsoured has come down, and come down far, but who never will give up!

I fancy my reader wondering at my excitement, and doubtful of my meaning. Let me explain my terms. What is meant by giving up: what by coming down?

By coming down I understand *this*: Learning from the many mortifications, disappointments, and rebuffs which we must all meet as we go on through life, to think more humbly of ourselves, intellectually, morally,

socially, physically, æsthetically: yet, while thinking thus humbly of ourselves and our powers, to resolve that we shall continue to do our very best: and all this with a kindly heart and a contented mind. Such is my ideal of true and Christian coming down: and I regard as a true hero the man who does it rightly. It is a noble thing for a man to say to himself, 'I am not at all what I had vainly fancied myself: my mark is far, very far lower than I thought it had been: I had fancied myself a great genius, but I find I am only a man of decent ability: I had fancied myself a man of great weight in the county, but I find I have very little influence indeed: I had fancied that my stature was six feet four, but I find that I am only five feet two: I had fancied that in such a competition I never could be beaten, but in truth I have been sadly beaten: I had fancied [suffer me, reader, the solemn allusion] that my Master had entrusted me with ten talents, but I find I have no more than one. But I will accept the humble level which is mine by right, and with God's help I will do my very best there. I will not kick dogs nor curse servants: I will not try to detract from the standing of men who are cleverer, more eminent, or taller than myself: I will heartily wish them well. I will not grow soured, moping, and misanthropic. I know I am beaten and disappointed, but I will hold on manfully still, and never give up!' Such, kindly reader, is Christian coming down!

And what is giving up? Of course, you understand my meaning now. Giving up means that when you are beaten and disappointed, and made to understand that your mark is lower than you had fancied, you will throw down your arms in despair, and resolve that you will try no more. As for you, brave man, if you don't get all you

want, you are resolved you shall have nothing. If you are not accepted as the cleverest and greatest man, you are resolved you shall be no man at all. And while the other is Christian coming down, *this* is un-Christian, foolish, and wicked giving up. No doubt, it is an extremely natural thing. It is the first and readiest impulse of the undisciplined heart. It is in human nature to say, 'If I don't have all the pudding, I shall have none.' The grand way of expressing the same sentiment is, *Aut Cæsar aut nullus*. Of course, the Latin words stir the youthful heart. You sympathize with them, I know, my reader under five-and-twenty. You will see through them some day. They are just the heroic way of saying, I shall give up, but I never shall come down! They state a sentiment for babies, boys, and girls, not for reasonable women and men. For babies, I say. Let me relate a parable. Yesterday I went into a cottage, where a child of two years old sat upon his mother's knee. The little man had in his hand a large slice of bread and butter which his mother had just given him. By words not intelligible to me, he conveyed to his mother the fact that he desired that jam should be spread upon the slice of bread and butter. But his mother informed him that bread and butter must suffice, without the further luxury. The young human being (how thoroughly human) considered for a moment; and then dashed the bread and butter to the further end of the room. There it was: *Aut Cæsar aut nullus!* The baby would give up, but it would not come down! Alexander the Great, look at yourself! Marius among the ruins of Carthage, what do you think you look like here? By the time the youthful reader comes to understand that Byron's dark, mysterious heroes, however brilliantly set forth, are in conception

simply childish; by the time he is able to appreciate *Philip Van Artevelde* (I mean Mr. Henry Taylor's noble tragedy); he will discern that various things which look heroic at the first glance, will not *work* in the long run. And that practical principle is irrational which will not work. And that sentiment which is irrational is not heroic. The truly heroic thing to say, as well as the rational thing, is this: If I don't get all the pudding, I shall be content if I get what I deserve, or what God sends. If I am not *Cæsar*, there is no need that I should be *nullus*: I shall be content to be the highly respectable Mr. Smith. Though I am not equal to Shakspeare, I may write a good play. Though inferior to Bishop Wilberforce, I shall yet do my best to be a good preacher. It is a fine thing, a noble thing, as it appears to me, for a man to be content to labour hard and do his utmost, though well aware that the result will be no more than decent mediocrity, after all. It is a finer thing, and more truly heroic, to do your very best and only be second-rate, than even to resolve, like the man in the *Iliad*, —

“ Ἀὖτις ἀριστέειν, καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.”

There is a strain put upon the moral nature in contentedly and perseveringly doing this, greater than is put upon the intellectual by the successful effort to be best. And what would become of the world if all men went upon Homer's principle; and rather than come down from its sublime elevation, would fling down their tools and give up? Shall I, because I cannot preach like Mr. Melvill, cease to write sermons? Or shall I, because I cannot counsel and charm like the author of *Friends in Council*, cease to write essays? You may rely upon it I shall not. I do not forget who said, in words of praise concerning one

who had done what was absolutely but very little, 'She hath done what she could!' And what would become of me and my essays, if the reader, turning to them from the pages of Hazlitt or Charles Lamb, should say, 'I shall not come down; and if I find I have to do so I shall give up?' What if the reader refused to accept the plain bread and butter which I can furnish, unless it should be accompanied by that jam which I am not able to add?

Giving up, then, is the doing of mortified self-conceit, of sulky pettishness, of impatience, of recklessness, of desperation. It says virtually to the great Disposer of events, 'Everything in this world must go exactly as I wish it, or I shall sit down and die.' It is of the nature of a moral strike. But coming down generally means coming to juster and sounder views of one's self and one's own importance and usefulness; and if you come down gracefully, genially, and Christianly you work on diligently and cheerfully at that lower level. No doubt, to come down is a tremendous trial; it is a sore mortification. But trials and mortifications, my reader, are useful things for you and me. The hasty man, when obliged to come down, is ready to conclude that he may as well give up. In some matters it is a harder thing to go the one mile and stop at the end of it, than to go the twain. It is much more difficult to stop decidedly half-way down a very steep descent than to go all the way. If you are beaten in some competition, it is much easier to resolve recklessly that you will never try again, than to set manfully to work, with humble views of yourself, and try once more. Wisdom comes down: folly gives up. Wisdom, I say, comes down; for I think there can be little doubt that most men, in order to think rightly of themselves, must come to think much more humbly of them-

selves than they are naturally disposed to do. Few men estimate themselves too lowly. Even people who lack confidence in themselves are not without a great measure of latent self-esteem; and, indeed, it is natural enough that men should rate themselves too high, till experience compels them to come down. I am talking of even sensible and worthy men. They know they have worked hard; they know that what they have done has cost them great pains; they look with instinctive partiality at the results they have accomplished; they are sure these results are good, and they do not know *how* good till they learn by comparative trial. But when the comparative trial comes, there are few who do not meet their match — few who do not find it needful to come down. Perhaps even Shakspeare felt he must come down a little when he looked into one or two of Christopher Marlowe's plays. Clever boys at school, and clever lads at college, naturally think their own little circle of the cleverest boys or lads to contain some of the cleverest fellows in the world. They know how well they can do many things, and how hard they have worked to do them so well. Of course, they will have to come down, after longer experience of life. It is not that the set who ranked first among their young companions are not clever fellows; but the world is wide and its population is big, and they will fall in with cleverer fellows still. It is not that the head boy does not write Greek iambs well, but it will go hard but somewhere he will find some one who will write them better. They are rare exceptions in the race of mankind who, however good they may be, and however admirably they may do some one thing, will not some day meet their match — meet their superior, and so have painfully to come down. And, so far as my own experience has

gone, I have found that the very, very few, who never meet a taking down, who are first at school, then first at college, then first in life, seem by God's appointment to have been so happily framed that they could do without it; that to think justly of themselves they did not need to come down; that their modesty and humility equalled their merit; and that (though not unconscious of their powers and their success) they remained, amid the incense of applause which would have intoxicated others, unaffected, genial, and unspoiled.

People who lead a quiet country life amid their own belongings, seeing little of those of bigger men, insensibly form so excessive an estimate of their personal possessions as lays them open to the risk of many disagreeable takings down. You, solitary scholar in the country parsonage, have lived for six months among your books till you have come to fancy them quite a great library. But you pay a visit to some wealthy man of literary tastes. You see his fine editions, his gorgeous bindings, his carved oak book-eases; and when you return home you will have to contend with a temptation to be disgusted with your own little collection of books. Now, if you are a wise man, you will come down, but you won't give up; you will admit to yourself that your library is not quite what you had grown to think it, but you will hold that it is a fair library after all. When you go and see the grand acres of evergreens at some fine country house, do not return mortified at the prospect of your own little shrubbery which looked so fine in the morning before you set out. When you have beheld Mr. Smith's fine thoroughbreds, resist the impulse to whack your own poor steed. Rather pat the poor thing's neck: gracefully come down. It was a fine thing, Cato, banished from

Rome, yet having his little senate at Utica. He had been compelled to come down, indeed, but he clung to the dear old institution; he would not give up. I have enjoyed the spectacle of a lady, brought up in a noble baronial dwelling, living in a pretty little parsonage, and quite pleased and happy there; not sulking, not fretting, not talking like an idiot of 'what she had been accustomed to,' but heartily reconciling herself to simpler things — coming down, in short, but never dreaming of giving up. So have I esteemed the clergyman like Sydney Smith, who had commanded the attention of crowded congregations of educated folk, of gentlemen and gentlewomen, yet who works faithfully and cheerfully in a rural parish, and prepares his sermons diligently, with the honest desire to make them interesting and instructive to a handful of simple country people. Of course, he knows that he has come down, but he does not dream of giving up.

There is in human nature a curious tendency to think that if you are obliged to fall, or if you have fallen, a good deal, you may just as well go all the way; and it would be hard to reckon the amount of misery and ruin which have resulted from this mistaken fancy, that if you have come down, you may give up at once. A poor man, possibly under some temptation that does not come once in ten years, gets tipsy; walking along in that state he meets the parish clergyman; the clergyman's eye rests on him in sorrow and reproach. The poor man is heartily ashamed; he is brought to a point at which he may turn the right way or the wrong way. He has not read this essay, and he takes the wrong. He thinks he has been so bad, he cannot be worse. He goes home and thrashes his wife; he ceases attending church; he takes

his children from school: he begins to go to destruction. All this founds on his erroneously imagining that you cannot come down without giving up. But I believe that, in truth, as the general rule, the fatal and shameful deed on which a man must look back in bitterness, and sorrow all his life, was done *after* the point at which he grew reckless. It was *because* he had given up that he took the final desperate step; he did not give up because he had taken it. The man did a really desperate deed because he thought wrongly that he had done a desperate deed already, and could not now be any worse; and sad as are intellectual and social coming down, and likely to result in giving up as these are, they are not half so sad nor half so perilous as moral coming down. It must indeed be a miserable thing for man or woman to feel that they have done something which will shame all after-life — something which will never let them hold up their head again, something which will make them (to use the expressive language of Scripture) ‘go softly all their days.’ Well, let such come down; let them learn to be humble and penitent; but for any sake don’t let them give up! *That* is the great Tempter’s last and worst suggestion. *His* suggestion to the fallen man or woman is, You are now so bad that you cannot be worse — you had better give up at once; and Judas listened to it and went and hanged himself; and the poor Magdalen, fallen far, but with a deep abyss beneath her yet, steals at midnight, to the dark arch and the dark river, with the bitter desperate resolution of Hood’s exquisite poem, ‘Anywhere, anywhere, out of the world!’ I remember an amusing exemplification of the natural tendency to think that having come down you must give up, in a play in which I once saw Keeley, in my play-going days. He

fancied that he had (unintentionally) killed a man : his horror was extreme. Soon after, by another mischance, he killed (as he is led to believe) another man : his horror is redoubled ; but now there mingles with it a reckless desperation. Having done such dreadful things, he concludes that he cannot be worse, whatever he may do. Having come so far down, he thinks he may as well give up ; and so the little fat man exclaims, with a fiendish laugh, ‘ Now I think I had better kill somebody else ! Ah, how true to nature ! The plump desperado was at the moment beyond remembering that the sound view of the case was, that if he had done so much mischief it was the more incumbent on him to do no more. The poor lad in a counting-house who wellnigh breaks his mother’s heart by taking a little money not his own, need not break it outright by going entirely to ruin. Rather gather yourself up from your fall. Though the sky-scraper spars are gone, we may rig a jury mast : —

‘ And from the wreck, far scattered o’er the rocks,
Build us a little bark of hope once more.’

We are being taught all through life to come down in our anticipations, our self-estimation, our ambition. We aim high at first. Children expect to be kings, or at least to be always eating plum pudding and drinking cream. Clever boys expect to be great and famous men. They come gradually to soberer views and hopes. Our vanity and self-love and romance are cut in upon day by day : step by step we come down, but, if we are wise, we never give up. We hold on steadfastly still ; we try to do our best. The painful discipline begins early. The other day I was at our sewing-school. A very little girl came up with great pride to show me her work. It was very

badly done, poor little thing. I tried to put the fact as kindly as possible ; but of course I was obliged to say that the sewing was not quite so good as she would be able to do some day. I saw the eyes fill and the lips quiver : there were mortification and disappointment in the little heart. I saw the temptation to be petted, to throw the work aside — to give up. But better thoughts prevailed. She felt she must come down. She went away silently to her place and patiently tried to do better. Ah, thought I to myself, there is a lesson for *you*.

Let me now think of intellectual giving up and coming down.

I do not suppose that a thorough blockhead can ever know the pain of intellectual coming down. From his first schooldays he has been made to understand that he is a blockhead, and he does not think of entering himself to run against clever men. A large dray-horse is saved the mortification of being beaten for the Derby ; for he does not propose to run for the Derby. The pain of intellectual coming down is felt by the really clever man, who is made to feel that he is not so clever as he had imagined ; that whereas he had fancied himself a first-class man, he is no more than a third-class one ; or that, even though he be a man of good ability, and capable of doing his own work well, there are others who can do it much better than he. You would not like, my clever reader, to be told that not much is expected of you ; that no one supposes that you can write, ride, walk, or leap like Smith. There was some thing that touched one in that letter which Mr. R. H. Horne wrote to the *Times*, explaining how he was going away to Australia because his poetry was neglected and unappreciated. What slow, painful years of coming

down the poet must have gone through before he thus resolved to give up. I never read *Orion*; and living among simple people, I never knew any one who had read the work. It may be a work of great genius. But the poet insisted on giving up when, perhaps, the right thing for him was to have come down. Perhaps he over-estimated himself and his poetry; perhaps it met all the notice it deserved.

The poet stated, in his published letter, that his writings had been most favourably received by high-class critics; but he was going away because the public treated him with entire neglect. Nobody read him, or cared for him, or talked about him. 'And what did the learned world say to your paradoxes?' asked good Dr. Primrose; but his son's reply was, 'The learned world said nothing at all to my paradoxes.' Such appears to have been the case with Mr. Horne; and so he grew misanthropic, and shook from his feet the dust of Britain. He gave up, in short; but he refused to come down. And no doubt it is easier to go off to the wilderness at once than to conclude that you are only a middling man after having long regarded yourself as a great genius. It must be a sad thing for an actor who came out as a new Kean, to gradually make up his mind that he is just a respectable, painstaking person, who never will draw crowds and take the town by storm. Many struggles must the poor barrister know before he comes down from trying for the great seal, and aims at being a police magistrate. So with the painter; and you remember how poor Haydon refused to come down, and desperately gave up. It cannot be denied that, to the man of real talent, it is a most painful trial to intellectually come down; and that trial is attended with a

strong temptation to give up. Really clever men not unfrequently have a quite preposterous estimate of their own abilities; and many takings down are needful to drive them out of *that*. And men who are essentially middling men intellectually, sometimes have first-class ambition along with third-rate powers; and these coming together make a most ill-matched pair of legs, which bear a human being very awkwardly along his path in life, and expose him to numberless mortifications. It is hard to feel any deep sympathy for such men, though their sufferings must be great. And, unhappily, such men, when compelled to come down, not unfrequently attempt by malicious arts to pull down to their own level those to whose level they are unable to rise. I have sometimes fancied one could almost see the venomous vapours coming visibly from the mouth of a malignant, commonplace, ambitious man, when talking of one more able and more successful than himself.

Possibly social coming down is even more painful than intellectual. It is very sad to see, as we sometimes do, the father of a family die, and his children in consequence lose their grade in society. I do not mean, merely to have to move to a smaller house, and put down their carriage; for all *that* may be while social position remains unchanged. I mean, drop out of the acquaintance of their father's friends; fall into the society of coarse, inferior people; be addressed on a footing of equality by persons with whom they have no feelings or thoughts in common; be compelled to sordid shifts and menial work and frowsy chambers. Threadbare carpets and rickety chairs often indicate privation as extreme as shoeless feet and a coat out at elbows. We might probably smile at people who felt the painfulness

of coming down, because obliged to pass from one set to another in the society of some little country town, where the second circle is not unfrequently (to a stranger's view) very superior to the first in appearance, manners, and means. But there is one line which it must cost a parent real anguish to make up his mind that his children are to fall below after having been brought up above it: I mean the one essentially impassable line of society — the line which parts the educated, well-bred gentleman from the man who is not such. There is something terrible about *that* giving up. And how such as have ever known it, cling to the upper side of the line of demarcation. We have all seen how people work and pinch and screw to maintain a decent appearance before the world, while things were bare and scanty enough at home. And it is an honest and commendable pride that makes the poor widow, of small means but with the training and feeling of a lady, determine never to give up the notion that her daughters shall be ladies too. It need not be said that such a determination is not at all inconsistent with the most stringent economy or the most resolute industry on her own or her girls' part. I did not sympathize with a letter which S. G. O. lately published in the *Times*, in which he urged that people with no more than three hundred a-year, should at once resolve to send their daughters out as menial servants, instead of fighting for the position of ladies for them. I thought, and I think, that *that* letter showed less than its author's usual genial feeling, less than his usual sound sense. Kind and judicious men will probably believe that a good man's or woman's resistance to social coming down, and especially to social giving up, is deserving of all respect and sympathy. A poor clergy

man, or a poor military man, may have no more than three hundred a-year; but I heartily venerate his endeavours to preserve his girls from the society of the servants' hall and the delicate attentions of Jeames. The world may yet think differently, and manual or menial work may be recognized as not involving social giving up; but meanwhile the step is a vast one, between the poorest governess and the plumpest housemaid.

A painful form of social coming down falls to the lot of many women when they get married. I suppose young girls generally have in their mind a glorified ideal of the husband whom they are to find; wonderfully handsome, wonderfully clever, very kind and affectionate, probably very rich and famous. Sad pressure must be put upon a worthy woman's heart before she can resolve to give up all romantic fancies, and marry purely for money. There must be sad pressure before a young girl can so far come down as to resolve to marry some man who is an old and ugly fool. Yet how many do! No doubt, reader, you have sometimes seen couples who were paired, but not matched; a beautiful young creature tied to a foul old satyr. Was not your reflection, as you looked at the poor wife's face, 'Ah! how wretchedly you must have come down.' And even when the husband is really a good old man, you cannot but think how different he is from the fair ideal of a girl's first fancy. Before making up her mind to such a partner as that, the young woman had a good deal to give up. And probably men, if of an imaginative turn, have, when they get married, to come down a good deal too. I do not suppose any thing about the clever man's wife but what is very good; but surely, she is not always the sympathetic, admiring companion of his early

visions. Think of the great author, walking in the summer fields, and saying to his wife, as he looked at the frisking lambs, that they seemed so innocent and happy that he did not wonder that in all ages the lamb has been taken as the emblem of happiness and innocence. Think of the revulsion in his mind when the thoughtful lady replied, after some reflection, ‘Yes, lamb is very nice, especially with mint sauce!’ The great man had no doubt already come down very much in his expectation of finding in his wife a sympathetic companion; but after *that*, he would probably give up altogether. Still, it is possibly less painful for a clever man to find, as years go on, and life sobers into the prosaic, that he must come down sadly in his ideas of the happiness of wedded life, than it is for such a man fairly to give up before marriage, making up his mind that in *that* matter, as in most others, men must be content with what they can get, though it be very inferior to what they could wish. I feel a great disgust for what may be called sentimentality; in practical life sentimental people, and people who talk sentimentally, are invariably fools; still it appears to me that there is sober truth in the following lines, which I remember to have read somewhere or other, though the truth be somewhat sickly and sentimentally expressed:—

‘And as the dove, to far Palmyra flying,
From where her native founts of Antioch gleam
Weary, exhausted, longing, panting, sighing,
Lights sadly at the desert’s bitter stream;

‘So many a soul, o’er life’s drear desert faring,—
Love’s pure, congenial spring unfound, unquaffed,—
Suffers, recoils, then, thirsty and despairing
Of what it would, descends and sips the nearest draught.’

Most people find it painful to come down in the matter of growing old. Most men and women cling, as long as may be, to the belief that they are still quite young, or at least not so very old. Let us respect the clinging to youth: there seems to me much that is good in it. It is an unconscious testimony to the depth and universality of the conviction that, as time goes on, we are leaving behind us the more guileless, innocent, and impressionable season of our life. We feel little sympathy, indeed, for the silly old woman who affects the airs and graces of a girl of seventeen: who makes her daughters attire themselves like children when they are quite grown up; and who renders herself ridiculous in low dresses and a capless head when her head is half bald and her shoulders like an uncooked plucked fowl. *That* is downright offensive and revolting. And to see such an individual surrounded by a circle of young lads to whom she is talking in a buoyant and flirting manner, is as melancholy an exhibition of human folly as can anywhere be seen. But it is quite a different thing when man or woman, thoughtful, earnest, and pious, sits down and muses at the sight of the first grey hairs. Here is the slight shadow, we think, of a certain great event which is to come; here is the earliest touch of a chill hand which must prevail at length. Here is manifest decay; we have begun to die. And no worthy human being will pretend that this is other than a very solemn thought. And we look back as well as forward: how short a time since we were little children, and kind hands smoothed down the locks now growing scanty and grey! You cannot recognize in the glass, when you see the careworn, anxious face, the smooth features of the careless child. You feel you must come down; you

are young no more ! Yet you know by what shifts people seek in this respect to avoid coming down. We postpone, year after year, the point at which people cease to be young. We are pleased when we find people talking of men above thirty as young men. Once, indeed, Sir Robert Peel spoke of Lord Derby at forty-five as a man in "the buoyancy of youth." Many men of five-and-forty would feel a secret elation as they read the words thus employed. The present writer wants a good deal yet of being half-way ; yet he remembers how much obliged he felt to Mr. Dickens for describing Tom Pinch, in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (in an advertisement to be put in the *Times*), as 'a respectable young man, aged thirty-five.' You remember how Sir Bulwer Lytton, as he has himself grown older, has made the heroes of his novels grow older *pari passu*. Many years ago his romantic heroes were lads of twenty ; *now* they are always sentimental men of fifty. And in all this we can trace a natural conviction of the intellect, as well as the natural disinclination in any respect to come down. For youth, with all its folly, is by common consent regarded as a better thing than age, with all its experience : and thus to grow old is regarded as coming down. And there is something very touching, something to be respected and sympathized with by all people in the vigour of life, in the fashion in which men who have come down so far as to admit that they have grown old, refuse to give up by admitting that they are past their work ; and, indeed, persist in maintaining, after fifty years in the church or thirty on the bench, that they are as strong as ever. Let us reverence the old man. Let us help him in his determination not to give up. Let us lighten his burden when we can do so, and then

give him credit for bearing it all himself. If there be one respect in which it is especially interesting and respectable when a man refuses to give up at any price, and indeed is most unwilling to come down, it is in regard of useful, honest labor in the service of God and man. Sometimes the unwillingness to come down in any degree is amusing, and almost provoking. I remember once, coming down a long flight of steps from a railway station, I saw a venerable dignitary of the church, who had served it for more than sixty years, coming down with difficulty, and clinging to the railing. Now, what I ought to have done was, to remain out of his view, and see that he got safely down without making him aware that I was watching him. But I hastily went up to him and begged him to take my arm, as the stair was so slippery and steep. I think I see the indignation of the good man's look. 'I assure you,' he replied, 'my friend, I am quite as able to walk down the steps alone as you are!'

Apart from the more dignified regrets which accompany the coming down of growing old, there are petty mortifications which vain people will feel as they are obliged to come down in their views as to their personal appearance. As a man's hair falls off, as he grows unwieldily stout, as he comes to blow like a porpoise in ascending a hill, as his voice cracks when he tries to sing, he is obliged step by step to come down. I heartily despise the contemptible creature who refuses to come down when nature bids him: who dyes his hair and his moustache, rouges his face, wears stays, and pads out his chest. Yet more disgusting is the made-up old reprobate when, padded, rouged, and dyed, as already said, he mingles in a circle of fast young men, and disgusts even them by the foul pruxiency

of his talk. Kick him out, muscular Christian ! Tell him what you think of him, and see how the despicable wretch will cower ! But while this refusing to come gracefully down as to physical aspect with advancing time is thoroughly abominable, let it be remembered that even in this matter the judicious man will not give up, though he will come down. Don't grow slovenly and careless as you grow old. Be scrupulously neat and tidy in dress. It is a pleasant sight — pleasant like the trimly raked field of autumn — the speckless, trim, white neck-clothed, well-dressed old man.

That we may wisely come down, we need frequently to be reminded that we ought to do so. We need, in fact, a good many takings down as we go on through life, or we should all become insufferable. I speak of ordinary men. The old vanity keeps growing up ; and like the grass of a lawn, it needs to be often mown down ; and however frequently and closely it is mown, there will always (as with the lawn) be quite enough of it. You meet with some wholesome, mortifying lesson ; you feel you must come down ; and you do. You think humbly and reasonably of yourself for a while. But the grass is growing again : your self-estimation is getting up again ; you are beginning to think yourself very clever, great, and eminent, when some rude shock undeceives you. You are roughly compelled to think of yourself more meekly. You find that in the general judgment you are no great author, artist, actor, cricket-player, shot, essay writer, preacher. You are so mortified that you think you may at once give up ; but, after deliberating, you resolve that you will only come down.

Great men have no doubt given up ; but it was either in some time of morbid depression, or when it was really

unavoidable that they should do so. Pitt gave up when on his dying-bed he heard of several great victories of the First Napoleon ; and, crying out with his blackening lips, ‘*Roll up the map of Europe,*’ turned his face to the wall and never spoke more. Sir Robert Peel gave up, when he tendered to the queen his final resignation of office. When the queen asked him if there was nothing he could wish her to do in testimony of her regard for him, his answer was — ‘Only that your majesty would never call me to your counsels again!’ What a giving up for that ambitious man ! Notwithstanding what has already been said in this essay, I am not, on reflection, sure that Marius had given up, or even come down, when he sat, in his lowest depression of fortune, amid the ruins of Carthage. Gelimer had finally given up when he was carried as a captive in the Roman triumph, looking with a smile upon all the pomp of the grand procession, and often exclaiming, ‘Vanity, vanity : all is vanity !’ But Dioeletian, busy among his eabbages, interested and content though the purple had been flung aside, had neither given up nor come down. Nor had Charles V. done either in that beautiful retreat which Mr. Stirling has so gracefully described. There was no coming down *there*, in the loss of self-estimation ; there was no giving up, in the bitter and despairing sense, when the greatest monarch of the great sixteenth century, in his greatest eminence, calmly laid down the eares of royalty, that in his last days he might enjoy quiet, and have space in which to prepare for the other world. It was only that ‘the royal eagle would rest his weary wings.’

But we have all known very small men who were always ready to give up, rather than that their silly vanity should be mortified by any degree of coming down. We

have all known cases highly analogous to that of the little child who threw away his bread and butter, because he could not have jelly too. I dare say, my reader, you may have seen a man who if he were not allowed to be the first man in some little company, the only talker, the only singer, the only philosopher, or the only jack-pudding, would give up, and sit entirely silent. In his own small way, he must be *aut Cæsar aut nullus*. A rival talker, singer, or mountebank, turns him pale with envy and wrath. Of course, all this founds on extreme pettiness of character, co-existing with inordinate vanity and silliness. And it is an offence which is its own severe punishment. The petty sin whips itself with a stinging scourge of pack-thread.

I have sometimes thought that it is a remarkable thing, how very quickly human beings can quite give up. An entire revolution may pass in a few hours, perhaps in a few minutes, upon our whole estimate of things. I should judge that a soldier, charging some perilous position in a delirium of excitement, and fancying military glory the sublimest thing in life; if he suddenly be disabled by some ghastly wound, and is borne away to the rear deadly sick, fevered, and wrung with agony, would give up many notions which he had cherished before. But I have been especially struck by witnessing how fast men can resign themselves to the last and largest giving up: how quickly they can make up their mind that they are dying and that all will be over in two or three hours. A man stricken with cholera at morning, and gone before night, has not the feeling that his death is sudden. When eternity comes very near, this world and all its concerns are speedily discerned as little more than shadows. We give up quickly, and with little effort, all those things and

fancies and opinions to which we elung very closely in health and life. The dying man feels that to him these are not. A Christian man, busy in the morning at his usual work, and smitten down at midday by some fatal disease or accident, could be quite resigned to die at evening. He may have had a hundred plans in his mind at daybreak : but it would cost him little effort to give them all up. And but for the dear ones he must leave behind, a very short time would suffice to resign a pious man to the *Nunc dimittis*. We grow accustomed, wonderfully fast, to the **most** new and surprising things.

But returning to matters less solemn, let me sum up what has been said so far, by repeating my grand principle, that in most cases the wise and good man will come down, but never give up. The heroic thing to say is this : Things are bad, but they may be worse ; and with God's blessing I shall try to make them better. Who does not know that by resolute adherence to this principle, many battles have been won after they had been lost ? Don't the French say that the English have conquered on many fields because they did not know when they had been beaten ; in short, because they would never give up ? Pluck is a great quality. Let us respect it everywhere ; at least, wherever enlisted on the side of right. Ugly is the bull-dog, and indeed blackguard-looking ; but I admire one thing about it : it will never give up. And splendid success has often come at length to the man who fought on through failure, hoping against hope. Mr. Disraeli might well have given up after his first speech in the House of Commons : many men would never have opened their lips there again. I declare I feel something sublime in that defiant *The day will come when you will*

be glad to hear me, when we read it by the light of after events. Of course, only extraordinary success could justify the words. They might have been the vapouring of a conceited fool. Galileo, compelled to appear to come down, did not give up: *Still it moves*. The great nonconformist preacher, Robert Hall, fairly broke down in his first attempt to preach; but he did not give up. Mr. Tennyson might have given up, had he been disheartened by the sharp reviews of his earliest volume. George Stephenson might also have given up, when his railway and his locomotive were laughed out of the parliamentary committee. Mr. Thackeray might have given up, when the publishers refused to have anything to do with *Vanity Fair*. The first articles of men who have become most successful periodical writers, have been consigned to the Balaam-box. Possibly this was in some measure the cause of their success. It taught them to take more pains. It was a taking down. It showed them that their task was not so easy: if they would succeed, they must do their very best. And if they had stamina to resolve that though taken down they would not give up, the early disappointment was an excellent discipline. I have known students at college whose success in carrying off honors was unexampled, who in their first one or two competitions were ignominiously beaten. Some would have given up. They only came down: then they went at their work with a will; and never were beaten more.

The man who is most likely to give up, is the man who foolishly refuses to come down. Every human being (excepting men like Shakspeare) must do either the one thing or the other at many points in their life: and the latter is the safer thing, and will save from the

former. It is the milder form of that suffering which follows disappointment and mortification. It is to the other as cow-pox to small-pox: by submitting to pass through many comings down, you will escape the sad misery of many givings up. Yet even vaccination, when it takes full effect, though much less serious than small-pox, is a painful and disagreeable thing: and in like manner, coming down in any way, socially, intellectually, physically, morally, is an infliction so painful, that men have devised various arts by which to escape coming down at all. The great way to escape intellectual coming down, is to hold that men will not do you justice; that the reviewers have conspired against you; that the anonymous assassins of the press stab you out of malignity and envy; that you are an unappreciated genius; and that if your powers were only known, you would be universally recognized as a very great man. When you preach, the people fall asleep: but *that* is because the people are stupid, not because your sermons are dull. When you send an article to a magazine, it is rejected: *that* is not because the article is bad, but because the editor is a fool. You write a book, and nobody reads it; it is because the book is carelessly printed, and the publisher devoid of energy. You paint a picture, and everybody laughs at it; it is because the taste of the age is low. You write a prize essay, and don't get the prize; it is because the judges had an objection to sound doctrine. And indeed there have been great men to whom their own age did injustice; and you may be one of these. It is highly probable that you are not. It is highly probable that your mark is gauged pretty fairly; no doubt it is lower than you think right: but it is best to come down to it. It is but a foolish world, and it will not last long; and

there are things more excellent than even to be a very clever man, and to be recognized as such. It is curious how men soothe themselves and avoid coming down, or mitigate the pain of doing so, by secretly cherishing the belief that in some one little respect they are different from, and higher than, all the rest of their kind. And it is wonderful how such a reflection has power to break one's fall, so to speak. You don't much mind being only a commonplace man in all other respects, if only there be one respect in which you can fondly believe you are superior to everybody else. A very little thing will suffice. A man is taller than anybody else in the town or parish; he has longer hair; he can walk faster; he is the first person who ever crossed the new bridge; when the queen passed near she bowed to him individually; he was the earliest in the neighbourhood who got the perforated postage stamps; he has the swiftest horse in the district; he has the largest cabbages; he has the oldest watch: one Smith spells his name as no other Smith was ever known to do. It is quite wonderful how far it is possible for men to find reason for cherishing in their heart a deep-seated belief, that in something or other they stand on a higher platform than all the remainder of mankind. Few men live, who do not imagine that in some respect they stand alone in the world, or stand first. I have seen people quite proud of the unexampled disease under which they were suffering. It was none of the common maladies that the people round about suffered from. I have known a country woman boast, with undisguised elation, that the doctor had more difficulty in pulling out her tooth, than he ever before had in the case of mortal man. There is not a little country parish in Britain, but its population are persuaded that in

several respects and for several reasons, it is quite the most important in the empire.

There is an expedient not uncommonly employed by men to lessen their mortification when obliged to come down, which may possibly be effectual as a salve to wounded vanity, but which is in the last degree miserable and contemptible. It consists in endeavouring to bring everybody else down along with you. A man is unpopular as a preacher; he endeavours to disseminate the notion that the clergyman of the next parish is unpopular too, and that the current reports about his church being overcrowded, are gross exaggerations. A man has a very small practice as a physician; he assures an inquiring stranger that Dr. Mimp-on, who (everybody says) makes fourteen thousand a-year, does not really make fourteen hundred. A man's horses are always lame; he tells you malignantly that he knows privately, that the fine pair which Smith drives in his drag, are very groggy, and require to be shod with leather. Now I do not mean to assert that there is any essential malignity in a man's feeling comfort, when obliged to come down himself, in the reflection that other men have had to come down too; and that after coming down he still stands on the same level with multitudes more. It is a natural thing to find a certain degree of consolation in such reflections. Notwithstanding what Milton says to the contrary, there is no doubt at all that 'fellowship in pain' does 'divide smart.' If you were the only bald man in the world, or the only lame man, or the only man who had lost several teeth, you would find it much harder to resign your mind to your condition; in brief, to come down to it. There is real and substantial mitigation of all human ills and mortifications in the sight

of others as badly off. To fall on the ice along with twenty more is no great matter, unless indeed the physical suffering be great. To be guillotined as one of fifty is not nearly so bad as to go all alone. To be beaten in a competition along with half a dozen very clever fellows mitigates your mortification. The poor fellow, plucked for his degree, is a little cheered up when he goes out for a walk with three other men who have been plucked along with him. Napoleon, standing before a picture in which Alexander the Great was a figure, evinced a pleasing touch of nature when he said repeatedly, 'Alexander was smaller than me; much smaller.' The thing which I condemn is not that the man who has come down should look around with pleasure on his brethren in misfortune, but that the man who has come down should seek to pull down to his own level those whom in his secret soul he knows stand on a higher. What I condemn is envious and malignant detraction, with its train of wilful misrepresentation, sly innuendoes, depreciating shrugs and nods. I hate to hear a man speaking in terms of faint praise of another who has outstripped him in their common profession, saying that he is 'rather a clever lad,' that he 'really has some talent,' that he is 'not wholly devoid of power,' that he 'has done better than could be expected,' and the like. Very contemptible is a method of depreciation which I have often witnessed. It consists in asserting that Mr. A., whom everybody knows for a very ordinary man, is far superior to Mr. B., whom you are commending as a man of superior parts. I remember a certain public meeting. Dr. C. made a most brilliant and stirring speech; Dr. D. followed in a very dull one; Mr. E. next made a decent one. After the meeting was over, the envious E. thought

to take down C., and cover his own coming down, by walking up to D., and in a very marked manner, in the presence of C., congratulating D. on having made the speech of the evening. Oh, that we could all learn to acknowledge with frankness and heartiness the merit that overtops us! Don't let us try to pull it down. Read with pleasure the essay which you feel is far better than you could have written: listen with improvement to the sermon which you feel is far better than you could have preached. I think envy is a distant feeling. In a true heart it cannot live when you have come to know the envied man well. It is in our nature to like the man that surpassed us when we come to know him. Perhaps it is impossible to look at merit or success in our own peculiar line without making an involuntary comparison between these and our own. Perhaps it is natural to fancy that our great doings have hardly, as yet, met the appreciation they deserved. But I do not believe that it is natural, except in men of very bad natures, to cherish any other feeling than a kindly one towards the man whose powers are so superior to ours, that with hardly an apparent effort he beats us, far as Eclipse beat his compeers, in the especial walk of our own tastes and talents, when we have done our most laborious and our best.

It is oftentimes a real kindness to assure a man, though not quite truly, that he is not coming down. It may tend to keep him from giving up. Very transparent deceptions sometimes suffice to deceive us. You remember how Dr. Johnson, when he was breaking up in the last weeks of his long life, felt very indignant at any one who told him that in health and strength he was coming down. Once, when the good man was tottering on the verge of the grave, a new acquaintance said to him, 'Ah, doctor

I see the glow of health returning to your cheek : ’ where-
upon Johnson grasped his hand warmly, and said, ‘ God
bless you : you are the kindest friend I ever had ! ’ If
you, benevolent reader, wish to do a kindness, and to
elicit a grateful feeling, go and tell a man who is growing
bald that his hair is getting thicker : tell a man of seven-
ty that he is every day looking younger : tell a man who
can now walk but at a slow pace that he walks uncom-
monly fast : tell a middle-aged lady whose voice is crack-
ing, that it is always growing finer : tell a cottager who
is proud of his garden, about the middle of October, that
his garden is looking more blooming than in June : tell
the poor artisan, the skilled workman, who has been driv-
en by want of work to take to breaking stones for the
road (which in the Scotch mind holds the place which
sweeping a crossing holds in the English) that you are
pleased to see he has got nice light work for these
winter days ; and if you be the parish clergyman, stop
for a few minutes and talk cheerfully to him : if you
pass that poor down-hearted fellow to-day with only a
slight recognition, he would certainly fancy (with the in-
genious self-torment of fallen fortunes) that you did it
because he has been obliged so sadly to come down. But
if you want to prove yourself devoid of the instinctive
benevolence of the gentleman, you will walk up to the
man with a look of mingled grief and astonishment, and
say, ‘ O, John, I am sorry to see you have come to this ! ’
I have seen the like done. I have known people who,
not from malignity, but from pure stolidity and coarse-
ness of nature, would insist on impressing on the man’s
mind how far he had come down. Gelimer at Rome (or
Constantinople, I forget which) did **not** feel his fall more
than the decent Scotch carpenter or mason busy at his

heap of stones by the roadside. And who, that had either heart or head, but would rather try to keep him up, than to take him further down? It is the delicate discernment of these things that marks the gentleman and the gentlewoman. Such instinctively shrink from saying or doing a thing that will pain the feelings of another: if they say or do anything of the kind, it is not because they don't know what they are about. While vulgar people go through life, unintentionally and ignorantly sticking pins into more sensitive natures at every turn. You, my friend, accidentally meet an old school companion. You think him a low looking fellow as could well be seen. But you say to him kindly that you are happy to see him looking so well. He replies to you, with a confounded candour, 'I cannot say *that* of you; you are looking very old and careworn.' The boor did not mean to say anything disagreeable. It was pure want of discernment. It was simply that he is not a gentleman, and never can now be made one. 'Your daughter, poor thing, is getting hardly any partners,' said a vulgar rich woman to an old lady in a ball-room: 'it is really very bad of the young men.' The vulgar rich woman fancied she was making a kind and sympathetic remark. It is to be recorded that sometimes such remarks have their origin not in ignorance but in intentional malignity. Mr. Snarling, of this neighbourhood, deals in such. He sees a man looking cheerful after dinner, and laughing heartily. Mr. Snarling exclaims, 'Bless me, how flushed you are getting! Did any of your relations die of apoplexy?' If you should cough in the unhappy wretch's presenee, he will ask, with an anxious look, if there is consumption in your family. And he will receive your negative answer with an ominous shake of his head. '1

am sorry to hear,' says Mr. Snarling, the week after your new horse comes home, 'I am sorry to hear about that animal proving such a bad bargain. I was sure the dealer would cheat you.' 'It was very sad indeed,' says Mr. Snarling, 'that you could not get that parish which you wanted.' He shakes his head, and kindly adds, 'Especially, as you were so very anxious to get it.' 'I read the December number of *Fraser*' (in which you have an article), says the fellow, 'and of all the contemptible rubbish that ever was printed, *that* was decidedly the worst.' You cannot refrain from the retort, 'Yes, it was very stupid of the editor to refuse that article you sent him: it would have raised the character of the magazine.' Snarling's face grows blue: he was not aware that you knew so much. Never mind poor Snarling: he punishes himself very severely. Only a man who is very unhappy himself will go about doing all he can to make others unhappy. And gradually Snarling is understood, and then Snarling is shunned.

I trust that none of my readers have in them anything of the snarling spirit; but I doubt not that even the best-natured of them have occasionally met with human beings who were blown up with vanity and conceit to a degree so thoroughly intolerable, that it would have been felt as an unspeakable privilege to be permitted (so to speak) to stick a skewer into the great inflated wind-bag, and to take the individual several pegs down. It is fit and pleasing that a man in any walk of life should magnify his office, and be pleased with his own proficiency in its duties. One likes to see that. The man will be the happier, and will go through his work the better. But the irritating thing is to find a human being who will talk of nothing whatsoever except himself, and his own doings and importance; who plainly shows that he feels not the

least interest in any other topic of discourse ; and who is ever trying to bring back the conversation to number one. I have at this moment in my mind's eye a man, a woman, and a lad, in each of whom conceit appears to a degree which I never saw paralleled elsewhere. When you look at or listen to any one of them, the analogy to the blown-up bladder instantly suggests itself. They are very much alike in several respects. They are not ill-natured : though very commonplace, they are not utter blockheads : their great characteristic is self-complacency so stolid that it never will see reason to come down ; and so pachydermatous that it will be unaware of any gentle effort to take it down. There is a beautiful equanimity about the thorough dunce. He is so completely stupid, that he never for an instant suspects that he is stupid at all. He never feels any necessity to intellectually come down. A clever man has many fears that his powers are but small, but your entire booby knows no such fear. The clever man can appreciate, when done by another, that which he could not have done himself : and he is able to make many comparisons which take him down. But there are men, who could read a sermon of their own, and then a sermon by the bishop of Oxford, and see no great difference between the two.

And now, kindly reader, we have arrived at the end of the six long slips of paper, and this essay approaches its close. Let me say, before laying down the pen, that it is for commonplace people I write, when I advise those who look at these pages to come down intellectually to the mark fixed for them by their fellow-creatures — to believe that they are estimated pretty fairly, and appreciated much as they deserve. You and I, my friend, may possibly have fancied, once upon a time, that we were great and remarkable men ; but many takings down have

taught us to think soberly, and we know better now. We shall never do anything very extraordinary: our biography will not be written after we are gone. So be it. *Fiat Voluntas Tua!* We are quite content to come down genially. It does not matter much that we never shall startle the world with the echoes of our fame. Let us rank ourselves with 'Nature's unambitious under-wood, and flowers that prosper in the shade.' But, of course, there are great geniuses who ought not thus to come down — men who, though lightly esteemed by those around them, will some day take their place, by the consent of all enlightened judges, among the most illustrious of human kind. The very powers which are yet to make you famous, may tend to make the ignorant folk around you regard you as a crackbrained fool. You remember the beautiful fairy tale of the ugly duckling. The poor little thing was laughed at, pecked, and persecuted, because it was so different from the remainder of the brood, till it fled away in despair. But it was unappreciated, just because it was too good; for it grew up at length, and *then* met universal admiration: the ugly duckling was a beautiful swan! Even so that great man John Foster, preaching among a petty dissenting sect fifty years since, was set down as 'a perfect fool.' But intelligent men have fixed *his* mark now. It was because he was a swan that the quacking tribe thought him such an ugly duck. *You* may be such another. The chance is, indeed, ten thousand to one that you are not. Still, if you have the fixed consciousness of the divine gift within you, do not be false to your nature. Resolutely refuse to come down — only be assured, my friend, that should such be your resolution, you will have to resist many temptations to give up



CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNING THE DIGNITY OF DULNESS.

IF any man wishes to write with vigour and decision upon one side of any debated question, it is highly expedient that he should write before he has thought much or long upon the debated question. For calmly to look at a subject in all its bearings, and dispassionately to weigh that which may be said *pro* and *con.*, is destructive of that unhesitating conviction which takes its side and keeps it without a misgiving whether it be the right side, and which discerns in all that can be said by others, and in all that is suggested by one's own mind, only something to confirm the conclusion already arrived at. It must be often a very painful thing to have what may be termed a *judicial mind* — that is, a mind so entirely free from bias of its own, that in forming its opinion upon any subject, it is decided simply by the merits of the case as set before it; for the arguments on either side are sometimes all but exactly balanced. Yet it may be necessary to say yes to the one side and no to the other; it may be impossible to make a compromise — i. e., to say to both sides at once both yes and no. And if great issues depend upon the conclusion come to, a conscientious man may undergo an indescribable distraction and anguish before he concludes what to believe or to do. If a man be lord

chanceellor, or general commanding an army in action, there must often be a keen misery in the incapacity to decide which of two competing courses has most to say for itself. Oh, that every question could be answered rightly by either yes or no ! Oh, that one side in every quarrel, in every debate, were decidedly right, and the other decidedly wrong ! Or, if *that* cannot be, the next blessing that is to be desired by a human being who wishes to be of use where God has put him in this world, is, the gift of vigorous and intelligent one-sidedness ; for in practice conflicting views are often so nearly balanced, and the loss of time and energy caused by indecision is so great, that it is better to adopt the wrong view resolutely, and act upon it unhesitatingly, than to adopt the right view dubiously, and take the right path falteringly, and often looking back. And one feels somehow as if there were something degrading in indecision ; something manly and dignified in a vigorous will, provided that vigorous will be barely clear of the charge of blind, uncalculating obstinacy. For the spiritual is unquestionably a higher thing than the material, the living is better than the inert, the man than the machine. But the judicial mind approaches to the nature of a machine. It seems to lack the power of originating action ; to be determined entirely by foreign forces. It is simply a very delicate pair of scales. In one scale you put all that can be said on one side, in the other scale you put all that can be said on the other side, and the beam passively follows the greater weight. Of course, the analogy between the physical and the spiritual is never perfect. The scales which weigh argument differ in various respects from the scales which weigh sugar or tea. The material weighing-machine accepts its weights at the value marked upon

them, while the spiritual weighing-machine has the additional anguish of deciding whether the argument put into it shall be esteemed as an ounce, a pound, or a ton.

All this which has been said has been keenly felt by the writer in thinking of the subject of the present essay. I am sorry now that I did not begin to write it sooner. I could then have taken my side without a scruple, and have expressed an opinion which would have been resolute if not perfectly right. Various facts which came within my observation impressed upon me the fact that, in the judgment of very many people, there is a dignity about dulness. Various considerations suggested themselves as tending to prove that it is absurd to regard dulness as a dignified thing; and the business of the essay was designed to be, first to state and illustrate the common view, and next, to show that the common view is absurd. But who is there that does not know how in most instances, if it strikes you on a first glance that the majority of mankind hold and act upon a belief that is absurd, longer thought shakes your confident opinion, and ultimately you land in the conviction that the majority of mankind are quite right? The length of time requisite to reach those second thoughts which are proverbially best, varies much. It seems to require a lifetime (at least for men of warm heart and quick brain) to arrive at calm, enduring sense in the complications of political and social science.

In the mellow autumn of his days, the man who started as a republican, communist, and atheist, has settled (never again to be moved) into liberal conservatism and unpretending Christianity. It requires two or three years (reckoning from the first inoculation with the poison) to return to common sense in metaphysics. For myself,

it cost a week of constant thought to reach my present wit-stand, which may be briefly expressed as follows. Although many men carry their belief in the dignity of dulness to an unjustifiable excess, yet there is no small amount of sense in the doctrine of the dignity of dulness. Thus, in the lengthening light of various April evenings, did the writer muse; thus, while looking at many crocuses, yellow in the sun of several April mornings. Why is it, thought I, that dulness is dignified? Why is it, that to write a book which no mortal can read, because it is so heavy and uninteresting, is a more dignified thing than to write a book so pleasing and attractive that it shall be read (not as work, but as play) by thousands? Why is it that any article, essay, or treatise, which handles a grave subject and propounds grave truth, only in an interesting and readable style, is at once marked with the black cross of contempt, by being referred to the class of *light literature*, and spoken of as flimsy, flashy, slight, and the like; while a treatise on the self-same subject, setting out the self-same views, only in a ponderous, wearisome, unreadable, and (in brief) *dull* fashion, is regarded as a composition solid, substantial, and eminently respectable? Is it not hard, that by many stupid people a sermon is esteemed as deep, massive, theological, solid, simply because it is such that they find they cannot for their lives attend to it; and another sermon is held as flimsy, superficial, flashy, light, simply because it attracts or compels their attention? And I saw that the doctrine of the dignity of dulness, as held by commonplace people, is at the first glance mischievous and absurd, and apparently invented by stupid men for their encouragement in their stupidity. But gradually the thought developed itself, that rapidity of movement is inconsis-

ent with dignity. Dignity is essentially a slow thing. Agility of mind, no less than of body, befits it not. Rapid processes of thought, quick turns of feeling — a host of the little arts and characteristics which give interest to composition — have too much of the nimble and mercurial about them. A harlequin in ceaseless motion is undignified; a chief justice, sitting very still on the bench and scarcely moving, save his hands and head, is tolerably dignified; the king of Siam at a state pageant, sitting in a gallery in a sumptuous dress, and so immovable, even to his eyes, that foreign ambassadors have doubted whether he were not a wax figure, is very dignified; but the most dignified of all in the belief of millions of people of extraordinary stupidity was the Hindoo deity Brahm, who through innumerable ages remained in absolute quiescence, never stirring, and never doing anything whatever. So here, I thought, is the key of the mystery. There is a general prepossession that slowness has more dignity than agility; and a particular application of this general prepossession leads to a common belief, sometimes grossly absurd, sometimes not without reason, that dulness is a dignified thing.

Would you know, my youthful reader, how to earn the high estimation of the great majority of steady-going old gentlemen? I will tell you how. You have, in the morning, attended a public meeting for some religious or benevolent purposes. Many speeches were made there. In the evening you meet at dinner a grave and cautious man, advanced in years, whom you beheld in a seat of eminence on the platform, and you begin to discourse of the speeches with him. Call to your remembrance the speech you liked best — the interesting, stirring, thrilling one that wakened you up when the others had wellnigh sent

you to sleep — the speech that you held your breath to listen to, and that made your nerves tingle and your heart beat faster, and say to the old gentleman, ‘Do you remember Mr. A.’s speech? Mere flash! Very superficial. Flimsy. All figures and flowers. Flights of fancy. Nothing solid. Very well for superficial people, but nothing there for people who think.” Then fix on the very dullest and heaviest of all the speeches made. Fix on the speech that you could not force yourself to listen to, though, when you did by a great effort follow two or three sentences, you saw it was very good sense, but insufferably dull; and say to the old gentleman, ‘Very different with the speech of Mr. B. Ah, there was mind *there*! Something that you could grasp! Good sound sense. No flash. None of your extravagant flights of imagination. Admirable matter. Who cares for oratory? Give me substance!’ Say all this, my youthful reader, to the solid old gentleman, and you will certainly be regarded by him as a young man of sound sense, and with taste and judgment mature beyond your years. And if you wish to deepen the favourable impression you have made, you may go on to complain of the triviality of modern literature. Say that you think the writings of Mr. Thackeray wearisome and unimproving; for your part, you would rather read the sermons of Doctor Log. Say that *Fraser’s Magazine* is flippant: you prefer the *Journal of the Statistical Society*. You cannot go wrong. You have an unerring rule. You have merely to consider what things, books, speeches, articles, sermons, you find most dull and stupid: then declare in their favour. Acknowledge the grand principle of the dignity of dulness. So shall the old gentleman tell his fellows that you have ‘got a head.’ There is ‘something

in you.' You are an 'uncommon fine young man.' The truth meanwhile will be, either that you are an impostor, shamming what you do not think, or a man of most extraordinary and anomalous tastes, or an incorrigible blockhead.

But whatever you may be yourself, do not fall into error in your judgment of the old gentleman and his compeers. Do not think of him uncharitably. If he made a speech at the meeting, you may be ready to conclude that the reason why he preferred the dull speech to the brilliant one is, that his own speech was very, very dull. And no doubt, in some cases, it is envy and jealousy that prompt the commonplace man to underrate the brilliant appearances of the brilliant man. It must be a most soothing thought to the ambitious man of inferior ability that the speech, sermon, or volume which greatly surpasses his own shall be regarded by many as not so good as his own, just because it is so incomparably better. It would be a pleasing arrangement for all race-horses which are lame and broken-winded, that because Eclipse distances the field so far, Eclipse shall therefore be adjudged to have lost the race. And precisely analogous is the floating belief in many commonplace minds, that if a discourse or composition be brilliant, it cannot be solid; that if it be interesting, this proves it to be flimsy. No doubt brilliancy is sometimes attained at the expense of solidity; no doubt some writings and speeches are interesting whose body of thought is very slight; which, as Scotch people say, *have very little in them*. But the vulgar belief on this matter really amounts to this: that if a speech, sermon, or book be very good, this proves it to be very bad. And as most people who produce such things produce very bad ones, you may easily see how willingly this belief is accepted by most people. Still, this does

not entirely explain the opinion expressed by the old gentleman already mentioned. It does not necessarily follow that he declares the speech of Mr. A. to be bad simply because he knows it was provokingly good, nor that he declares the speech of Mr. B. to be good simply because he knows it was soothingly bad. The old gentleman may have been almost or even entirely sincere in the opinion he expressed.

By long habit, and by pushing into an extreme a belief which has a *substratum* of truth, he may have come to regard with suspicion the speech which interests him, and to take for granted, with little examination of the fact of the case, that it *must* be flimsy and slight, else he could not take it in so pleasantly and easily. And all this founds not merely on the grand principle of the dignity of dulness, but likewise on the impassable nature of the gulf which parts instruction from amusement, work from play. Work, it is assumed as an axiom, is of the nature of pain. To get solid instruction costs exertion: it is work: it is a painful thing. And the consequence is, that when a man of great skill and brilliant talent is able to present solid instruction in a guise so attractive that it becomes pleasant instead of painful to receive it, you are startled. Your suspicions are aroused. You begin to think that he must have sacrificed the solid and the useful. This cannot be work, you think: it must be play, for it is pleasant. This cannot be instruction, you think: it must be amusement, for it is easy and agreeable to follow it. This cannot be a right sermon, you think, for it does not put me asleep: it must be a flimsy and flashy declamation: or some such disparaging expression is used. This cannot be the normal essay, you think, for you read it through without yawning; you don't know

what is wrong, but you are safe in saying that its order of thought must be very light; the fact that you could read it without yawning proves that it is so. You forget the alternative, that solid and weighty thought, both in essay and sermon, may have been made easy to follow, by the interesting fashion in which they were put before you. But stupid people forget this alternative: they never think of it, or they reject it at the first mention of it. It is too absurd. It ignores the vital difference between work and play. Try a parallel case with an unsophisticated understanding, and you will see how ingrained in our nature is this prejudice. Your little boy is ill. He must have some medicine. You give him some of a most nauseous taste. He takes it, and feels certain that it will make him well. It *must* be medicine, he knows; and good medicine; because it is so abominably disagreeable. But give the little man some healing balm (if you can find it) whose taste is pleasant. He is surprised. His faith in the medicine is shaken. It won't make him well; it cannot be right medicine; because to take it is not painful or disagreeable. A poor girl in the parish was dying of consumption. Her parents had heard of cod-liver oil. They got the livers of certain cod-fish and manufactured oil for themselves. It was hideous to see, to smell, and to taste. I procured a bottle of the proper oil, and took it up to my poor parishioner. But it was plain that neither she nor her parents had much faith in it. It was not disgusting. It had little taste or odour. It was easy to take. And it was plain, though the girl used it to please me, that the belief in the cottage was, that by eliminating the disgusting element, you eliminated the virtue of the oil; in brief, that when medicine ceases to be disagreeable, it ceases to be useful. There is in hu-

man nature an inveterate tendency to judge so. And it was this inveterate tendency, much more than any spirit of envy or jealousy, that was at the foundation of the old man's opinion, that the dull speech or sermon was the best; that the interesting speech or sermon was flimsy. All the virtue of the cod-liver oil was there though the nauseous accompaniments were gone; and solid thought and sound reasoning may have been present in quantity as abundant and quality as admirable in the interesting speech as in the dull one; but it is to be confessed the *à priori* presumption was the other way. There must be something — you don't know what — wrong about the work which is as pleasant as play. There must be something — you cannot say what — amiss about the sermon which is as interesting as a novel. It cannot be sound instruction, which is as agreeable as amusement; any more than black can be white, or pain can be pleasure. *That* is the unspoken, undefined, uneradicable belief of the dull majority of human kind. And it appears, day by day, in the depreciatory terms in which stupid, and even commonplace, people talk of compositions which are brilliant, interesting, and attractive, as though the fact of their possessing these characteristics were proof sufficient that they lack solidity and sound sense.

Now, the root of the prevalent error (so far as it is an error) appears to me to lie in this: that sound instruction and solid thought are regarded as analogous to *medicine* — whereas they ought to be regarded as analogous to *food*. It may possibly be assumed, that medicine is a thing such in its essential nature, that to be useful, it must be disagreeable. But I believe that it is now universally admitted, that the food which is most pleasant to take, is the most wholesome and nutritious. The time is past in

which philosophic and strong-minded persons thought it a fine thing to cry up a Spartan repulsiveness in the matter of diet. Raw steaks, cut from a horse which died a natural death ; and the sour milk of mares, are no longer considered the provender upon which to raise men who shall be of necessity either thoughtful or heroic. Unhappily, in the matter of the dietetics of the mind, the old notion still prevails with very many. And there is something to be said for it ; but only what might also be said for it in regard to the food of the body. For though, as a general rule, the most agreeable food is the most wholesome, yet there is an extensive kingdom into which this law does not extend ; I mean the domain of sugar-plums, of pastry, of crystallized fruits, and the like. These are pleasant ; but you cannot live upon them ; and you ought not to take much at a time. And if you give a child the unlimited run of such materials for eating, the child will assuredly be the worse for it. Well, in mental food the analogy holds. Here, too, is a realm of sweets, of devilled bones, of euraçoa. Feverish poetry, ultra-sentimental romance, eccentric wit and humour, are the parallel things. Rabelais, Sterne, *The Doctor* of Southey, the poetry of Mrs. Hemans, the plays of Otway, Marlowe, Ford, and Dekker, may all, in limited quantity, be partaken of with relish and advantage by the healthy appetite ; but let there not be too much of them ; and do not think to nourish your intellectual nature on such food alone. No child, shiny with excessive pastry, or tooth-aching and sulky through superabundant sugar-plums, is in a plight more morbid and disagreeable than is the clever boy or girl of eighteen, who from the dawn of the taste for reading, has been turned into a large library to choose books at will, and who has crammed an inexperi-

enced head and undisciplined heart with extravagant fancies and unreal feelings from an exclusive diet of novels and plays. But, setting aside the department of sweets, I maintain, that given wholesome food, the more agreeably it is cooked and served up, the better ; and given sound thought, the more interesting and attractive the guise in which it is presented, the better. And all this may be, without the least sacrifice of the sound and substantial qualities. No matter what you are writing — sermon, article, book — let Sydney Smith's principle be remembered, that *every style is good, except the tiresome*. And who does not know, that there have been men who, without the least sacrifice of solidity, have invested all they had to say with an enchaining interest ; and led the reader through the most abstruse metaphysics, the closest reasoning, the most intricate mazes of history, the gravest doctrines of theology, in such fashion that the reader was profited while he thought he was only being delighted, and charmed while he was informed !

The thing has been done ; of course it is very difficult to do it ; and to do it demands remarkable gifts of nature and training. The extraordinary thing is that where a man has, by much pains, or by extraordinary felicity, added interest to utility, — given you solid thought in an attractive form, — many people will, and that not entirely of envy, but through *bonâ fide* stupidity, at once say that the interesting sermon, the picturesque history, the lively argument, is flimsy and flashy, superficial, wanting in depth, and so forth. Yet if you think it unpardonable in the cook, who has excellent food given to prepare, to send it up spoiled and barely eatable, is it not quite as bad in the man who has given to him important facts, solemn doctrines, weighty reasons, yet who presents them to his

readers or hearers in a tough, dry, stupid shape? Does the turbot, the saddle of mutton, cease to be nutritious because it is well cooked? And wherefore, then, should the doctrine or argument become flimsy because it is put skilfully and interestingly? I do believe there are people who think that in the world of mind, if a good beef-steak be well cooked, it turns in the process into a stick of barley-sugar.

To this class belongs the great majority of stupid people, and also of quiet, steady-going people, of fair average ability. Among the latter there is not only a dislike of clever men, arising from envy: but a real honest fear of what they may do, arising from a belief that a very clever man cannot be a safe or judicious man, and that a striking view cannot be a sound view. Once upon a time, in a certain church, I heard a sermon preached by a certain great preacher. The congregation listened with breathless attention. The sermon was indeed a very remarkable one; and I remember well how I thought that never before had I understood the magic spell which is exerted by fervid eloquence. And walking away from church, I was looking back upon the track of thought over which the preacher had borne the congregation, and thinking how skilfully and admirably he had carried his hearers, easily and interestedly, through very difficult ground, and over a very long journey. Thus musing, I encountered a very stupid clergyman who had been in church too. 'Did you hear Mr. M——?' said he. 'It was mere flash; very flimsy; all flowers. Nothing solid.' With wonder I regarded my stupid friend. I said to him: Strip off from the sermon all the fancy and all the feeling; look at the bare skeleton of thought: and then I stated

it to the man. Is not *that*, said I, a marvel of metaphysical acuteness, of rigorous logic, of exact symmetry? Cut off the flash as you call it; here is the solid residuum; is *that* slight or flashy? Is there not three times the thought of ordinary humdrum sermons even in quantity, not to name the incalculable difference in the matter of quality? On this latter point, indeed, I did not insist; for with some folk quantity is the only measure of thought; and in the world of ideas a turnip is with such equal to a pineapple, provided they be of the same size. 'Don't you see,' said I, with growing wrath, to my stupid friend, who regarded me meanwhile with a stolid stare, 'that it only shows what an admirable preacher Mr. M—— is, if he was able to carry a whole congregation in rapt attention along a line of thought, in traversing which you and I would have put all our hearers asleep? You and I might possibly have given the thought like the diamond as it comes from the mine, a dull pebble; and because that eminent man gave it polished and glancing, is it therefore not a diamond still?' Of course, it was vain to talk. The stolid preacher kept by his one idea. The sermon could not be solid, because it was brilliant. Because there was gleam and glitter, there could not be anything besides. What more could be said? I knew that my stupid friend had on his side the majority of the race.

It is irritating when you have written an essay with care, after a great deal of thought, to find people talk slightly of it as very light. 'The essays of Mr. Q—— are sensible and well written, but the order of thought is of the lightest.' I found these words in a review of certain essays, written by a man who had

evidently read the essays. Ask people what they mean by such vague phrases of disparagement; and if you can get them to analyze their feeling, you will find that in five cases out of six, they mean simply that they can read the compositions with interest? Is *that* anything against them? *That* does not touch the question whether they are weighty and sound. They may be sound and weighty for all that. Of course, that which is called *severe thought* cannot, however skilfully put and illustrated, be so easily followed by undisciplined minds. But in most cases the people who talk of a man's writings being light, know nothing at all about severe thinking. They mean that they are sure that an essay is solid, if they find it uninteresting. It must be good if it be a weary task to get through it. The lack of interest is the great test that the composition is of a high order. It must be dignified, because it is so dull. You read it with pleasure; therefore it must be flimsy. You read it with weariness; therefore it must be solid. Or, to put the principle in its simplest form — the essay must be bad because it is so good. The essay must be good, because it is so bad. Here we have the foundation principle of the grand doctrine of the dignity of dulness.

And, by hosts of people, the principle is unsparingly applied. An interesting book is flimsy, because it is interesting. An interesting sermon is flimsy, because it is interesting. They are referred to the class of light literature. And it is undignified to be light. It is grand, it is clerical, it is worthy of a cabinet minister, it is even archiepiscopal, to write a book which no one would voluntarily read. But some stupid people think it unclerical to write a book which sensible folk will

read with pleasure. It would amuse Mr. Kingsley, and I am sure it would do no more than amuse him, to hear what I have heard steady-going individuals say about his writings. The question whether the doctrines he enforces be true or not, they cared not for at all. Neither did they inquire whether or not he enforces, with singular fervor and earnestness, certain doctrines of far-reaching practical moment. *That* matters not. He enforces them in books which it is interesting and even enchainingly to read; and this suffices (in their judgment) to condemn these books. I have heard stupid people say that it was not worthy of Archbishop Whately to write those admirable *Annotations on Bacon's Essays*. No doubt that marvellously acute intellect does in those *Annotations* apply itself to a great variety of themes and purposes, greater and lesser, like a steam-hammer which can weld a huge mass of red-hot iron, and with equal facility drive a nail into a plank by successive gentle taps. No doubt the volume sometimes discusses grave matters in a grave manner, and sometimes matters less grave (but still with a serious bearing on life and its affairs) in a playful manner. But on the whole, if you wished to convey to a stranger to the archbishop's writings (supposing that among educated people you could find one) some notion of the extent and versatility of his powers, it is probable that, of all his books, *this* is the one you would advise the stranger to read. 'Not so,' said my friend Dr. Log. 'The archbishop should not have published such a work.'

Who ever heard of an archbishop who wrote a book which young men and women would read because they enjoyed it? The book could not be dignified, because it was not dull. Why did the steady old gentlemen

among the fellows of a certain college in the university of Cambridge, a good many years ago, turn out and vote against a certain clergyman's becoming their head, who was infinitely the most distinguished of their number, and upon whose becoming their head every one had counted with certainty? He was a very distinguished scholar, a very successful tutor: a man of dignified manners and irreproachable character. Had he been no more, he had been the head of his college, and he had been a bishop now. But there was an objection which, in the minds of these frail but steady old gentlemen, could not be got over. *His sermons were interesting!* His warmest friends could not say that they were dull. When he came to do his duty as select preacher before the university, the church wherein he preached was crowded to excess. Not merely was the unbecoming spectacle witnessed of all the pews being filled; but it could not be concealed that the passages were crowded with human beings who were content to stand throughout the service. The old gentlemen could not bear this. The head of a college must be dignified; and how could a man be dignified who was not dull, even in the pulpit? The younger fellows were unanimous in the great preacher's favour; but the old gentlemen formed the majority, and they were unanimous against him. Some people suggested that they were envious of his greater eminence: that they wished to put down the man who, at a comparatively early age, had so vastly surpassed themselves. The theory was uncharitable; it was more—it was false. Jealousy had little part in the minds of these frail but safe old men. They honestly believed that the great preacher could not be solid or dignified, because he was brilliant and attractive. They never

heard his sermons; but they were sure that something must be wrong about the sermons, because multitudes wished to hear them. Is not the normal feeling after listening to a sermon to its close, one of gentle, unexpressed relief? The great preacher was rejected, and an excellent man was elected in his stead, who could not fail to be dignified, for never mortal was more dull. Cardinal Wiseman tells us very frankly that the great principle of the dignity of dulness is always recognized and acted on by the gentlemen who elect the pope. Gravity, approaching to stolidity; slowness of motion, approaching to entire standing-still; are (as a general rule) requisite in the human beings who succeed to the chair of St. Peter. It has been insinuated that in the Church of England similar characteristics are (or at least were) held essential in those who are made bishops, and, above all, archbishops. You can never be sure that a man will not do wrong who is likely to do anything at all. But if it be perfectly ascertained that a man will do nothing, you may be satisfied that he will do nothing wrong. This is one consideration; but the further one is the pure and simple dignity of dulness. A clergyman may look forward to a bishopric if he write books which are unreadable, but not if he write books which are readable. The chance of Dr. Log is infinitely better than that of Mr. Kingsley. And nothing can be more certain than that the principle of the dignity of dulness kept the mitre from the head of Sydney Smith. I do not mean to say that he was a suitable man to be a bishop. I think he was not. But it was not because of anything really unclerical about the genial man that he was excluded. The people who excluded him did not hesitate to appoint men obnoxious to

more serious charges than Sydney Smith. But then, whatever these men were or were not, they were all dull. They wrote much, some of them; but nobody ever read what they wrote. But Sydney Smith was interesting. You could read his writings with pleasure. He was unquestionably the reverse of dull, and therefore certainly the reverse of dignified. Through much of his latter life the same suspicion has, with millions of safe-going folk, thrown a shadow on Lord Brougham. He was too lively. What he wrote was too interesting. Solid old gentlemen feared for his good sense. They thought they never could be sure what he would do next. Even Lord St. Leonards lost standing with many when he published his *Handy Book on Property Law*. A lord-chancellor writing a book sold at railway stations, and read (with interest, too) in railway carriages! What was the world coming to? But it was quite becoming in the great man to produce that elaborate and authoritative work on *Vendors and Purchasers*, of which I have often beheld the outside, but never the inside. And wherefore did the book bescom a chancellor? Wherefore but because to the ordinary reader it was heavy as lead. Have not you, my reader, often heard like criticism of Lord Campbell's interesting volumes of the biography of his predecessors? 'Very interesting; very well written; much curious information; but not quite the thing for the first man on the judicial bench of Britain to write.' Now, upon what is this criticism founded, but upon the grand principle that liveliness and interest do not become the compositions of a man in important office: in brief, that *that* is not dignified, which is not dull.

But let us not be extreme. Let it be admitted that the

principle has some measure of truth. There are facts which appear to give it countenance, which really do give it countenance. *Punch* is more interesting than a sermon, *that* is admitted as a fact. The tacit inference is that an interesting sermon must have become interesting by unduly approximating to *Punch*. There is literature which may properly be termed light. There is thought which is superficial, flimsy, slight, and so on. There are compositions which are brilliant without being solid, in which there are many flowers and little fruit. And no doubt, by the nature of things, this light and flashy thought is more interesting, and more easily followed, than more solid material. You can read *Vanity Fair* when you could not read Butler's *Analogy*. You can read *Punch* when you could not read *Vanity Fair*. And the *à priori* presumption may be, when you find a composition of a grave class which is as interesting as one of a lighter class, that this interest has been attained by some sacrifice of the qualities which become a composition of a grave class. Let our rule be as follows: If the treatise under consideration be interesting because it treats of light subjects, which in themselves are more interesting than grave ones (as play always must be more pleasing than work), let the treatise be classed as light. But if in the treatise you find grave and serious thoughts set out in such a fashion as to be interesting, then all honour to the author of that treatise! He is not a slight, superficial writer, though stupid people may be ready to call him so. He is, in truth, a grave and serious writer, though he has succeeded in charming while he instructs. He is truly dignified, though he be not dull. He is doing a noble work, enforcing a noble principle: the noble principle, to wit (which most people silently assume is false), that

what is right need not of necessity be so very much less attractive than what is wrong. The general belief is, that right is prosy, humdrum, commonplace, dull; and that the poetry of existence, the gleam, the music, the thrill, the romance, are with delightful wrong. And taking work as the first meridian, marking what is right, many people really hold that any approximation to play (and all that interests and pleases is in so far an approximation to play) is a deflection in the direction of wrong, inasmuch as it is beyond question a marked departure from the line of ascertained right. Let us get rid of the notion! In morals, the opposite of right need not be wrong. Many things are right, and their opposites right too. Work is right. Play is the opposite of work, yet play is right too. Gravity is right: interest is right too; and though practically these two things seem opposed, they need not be so. And as we should bless the man who would teach us how to idealize our work into play, so should we bless the man who is able to blend gravity and interest together. Such a man as Macaulay was virtually spreading the flag of defiance in the face of stupid people holding a stupid belief, and declaring by every page he wrote, that what is right need not be unpleasant; that what is interesting need not be flimsy; that what is dignified need not be dull.

I am well aware that it is hopeless to argue with a prejudice so rooted as that in favour of the dignity of dulness; and especially hopeless when I am obliged to admit that I cannot entirely oppose that principle, that I feel a certain justice in it. Slowness of motion, I have said, is essentially more dignified than rapidity of motion. There is something dignified about an elephant walking along, with massive tramp; there is nothing dignified

about a frisking greyhound, light, airy, graceful. And it is to be admitted that some men frisk through a subject like a greyhound; others tramp through it like an elephant. And though the playful greyhound fashion of writing, that dallies and toys with a subject, may be the more graceful and pleasing, the dignity doubtless abides with the stern, slow, straightforward, elephantine tramp. The *Essays of Elia* delight you, but you stand in no awe of their author; the contrary is the ease with a charge of Lord Chief-Justice Ellenborough. And so thoroughly elephantine are the mental movements of some men, that even their rare friskiness is elephantine. Every one must know this who is at all acquainted with the ponderous and eowlike curvetings of the *Rambler*. Physical agility is inconsistent with physical dignity; mental agility with mental dignity. You could not for your life very greatly esteem the solemn advices given you from the pulpit on Sunday, by a clergyman whom you had seen whirling about in a polka on Friday evening. The momentum of that rotary movement would cling to him (in your feeling) still. I remember when I was a little boy what a shock it was to my impressions of judicial dignity to see a departed chief justice cantering down Constitution-hill on a tall, thoroughbred chestnut. The swift movement befitted not my recollections of the judgment-seat, the ermine, the great full-bottomed wig. I felt aggrieved and mortified even by the tallness and slenderness of the chestnut horse. Had the judge been mounted on a dray horse of enormous girth and vast breadth (even if not very high) I should have been comparatively content. Breadth was the thing desiderated by the youthful heart; breadth, and the solidity which goes with breadth, and the slowness of motion which goes with

solid extension, and the dignity which goes with slowness of motion. I speak of impression made on the undisciplined human soul, doubtless ; but then the normal impression made by anything is the impression it makes on the undisciplined human soul. In the world of mind, you may educate human nature into a condition in which all tendencies shall be reversed ; in which fire shall wet you, and water dry you. Who does not know that the estimation in which the humbler folk of a rural parish regard their clergyman, depends in a great degree upon his physical size ? A man six feet high will command greater reverence than one of five feet six ; but if the man of five feet six in height be six feet in circumference, then he will command greater reverence than the man of six feet in height, provided the latter be thin. And after great reflection, I am led to the conclusion, that the true cause of this bucolic dignity does not abide in mere size. Dignity, even in the country, is not in direct proportion to extension, as such. No ; it is in direct proportion to that slowness of movement which comes of solid extension. A man who walks very fast is less dignified than a man who walks very slow ; and that which conduces to the slow, ponderous, measured step, is a valuable accessory to personal dignity. But the connection is not so essential as the unthinking might conclude between personal dignity and personal bulk. Now, the composition, whether written or spoken, of some men, is (so to speak) a display of mental agility. It is the result of rapid mental movements, you can see. Not with massive heaves and sinkings, like the engines of an ocean steamship, did the mental machinery play that turned off such a book, such a speech, such an essay ; but rather with rapid jerkings of little cranks, and invisible whirlings of

little wheels. And the thing manufactured is pretty, not grand. It is very nice. You conclude that as the big steam-engine cannot play very fast, so the big mind too. The mind that can go at a tremendous pace you conclude to be a little mind. The mind that can skip about, you conclude cannot be a massive mind. There are truth and falsehood in your conclusion. Very great minds, guided by very comprehensive views, have with lightning-like promptitude rushed to grand decisions and generalizations. But it cannot be denied that ponderous machinery, physical and mental, generally moves slowly. And in the mental world, many folk readily suppose that the machinery which moves slowly is certainly ponderous. A man who gets up to speak in a deliberative assembly, and with a deep voice from an extensive chest, and inscrutable meaning depicted on massive features, slowly states his views, with long pauses between the members of his sentences, and very long pauses between his sentences, will by many people be regarded as making a speech which is very heavy metal indeed. Possibly it may be; possibly it may not. I ought to say, that the most telling deliberative speaker I ever heard, speaks in that slow fashion. But when *he* speaks on an important subject which interests him, every deliberate word goes home like a cannon-ball. He speaks in eighty-four pounders. But I have heard men as slow, who spoke in large soap-bubbles. And of all lightness of thought, deliver us from ponderous lightness! Nothings are often excusable, and sometimes pleasing; but pompous nothings are always execrable. I have known men who, morally speaking, gave away tickets for very inferior parish soup with the air of one freely dispensing invitations to the most sumptuous banquet that ever was provided by mortal. Oh!

to stick in a skewer, and see the great wind-bag collapse !

You do not respect the jackpudding who amuses you, though he may amuse you remarkably well. The more you laugh at him, the less you respect him. And, to the vulgar apprehension, any man who amuses you, or who approaches towards amusing you, or who produces anything which interests you (which is an approximation towards amusing you), will be regarded as, *quoad hoc*, approaching undignifiedly in the direction of the jackpudding. The only way in which to make sure that not even the vulgarest mind shall discern this approximation, is to instruct while you carefully avoid interesting, and still more amusing, even in the faintest degree. Even wise men cannot wholly divest themselves of the prejudice. You cannot but feel an inconsistency between the ideas of Mr. Disraeli writing *Henrietta Temple*, and Mr. Disraeli leading the House of Commons. You feel that somehow it costs an effort to feel that there is nothing unbefitting when the author of *The Caxtons* becomes a secretary of state. You fancy, at the first thought, that you would have had greater confidence in some sound, steady, solid old gentleman, who never amused or interested you in any way. The office to be filled is a dignified one ; and how can a man besit a dignified office who has interested and amused you so much ?

But the consideration which above all others leads the sober majority of mankind to respect and value decent and well-conducted dulness, is the consideration of the outrageous practical folly, and the insufferable wickedness, which many men of genius appear to have regarded it their prerogative to indulge in. You can quite understand how plain, sensible people may abhor an eccentric

genius, and wish rather for sound principle and sound sense. And probably most men whose opinion is of much value, would be thankful to have decent dulness in their nearest relations, rather than the brilliant aberrations of such men as Shelley, Byron, and Coleridge. Give us the plain man who will do his work creditably in life; who will support his children and pay his debts; rather than the very clever man who fancies that his cleverness sets him free from all the laws which bind commonplace mortals; who does not think himself called upon to work for his bread, but sponges upon industrious men, or howls out because the nation will not support him in idleness; who wonders at the sordid tradesman who asks him to pay for the clothes he wears, and leaves his children to be educated by any one who takes a fancy for doing so; who violates all the dictates of common morality and common prudence, and blasphemes because he gets into trouble by doing so; who will not dress, or eat, or sleep like other men; who wears round jackets to annoy his wife, and scribbles *Atheist* after his name in traveller's books; and in brief, who is distinguished by no characteristic so marked as the entire absence of common sense. I think, reader, that if you were sickened by a visit of a month's duration from one of these geniuses you would resolve that for the remainder of your life only dull, commonplace, respectable mortals should ever come under your roof. Let us be thankful that the days in which high talent was generally associated with such eccentricities are happily passing away. Clever men are now content to dress, look, and talk like beings of this world; and above all, they appear to understand that however clever a man may be, that is no reason why he should not pay his butcher's bill. How fine a character was that of Sir Walter

Scott combining homely sense with great genius! And how different from the hectic, morbid, unprincipled, and indeed blackguard mental organization of various brilliant men of the last age, was Shakspeare's calm and well-balanced mind! It is only the second-rate genius who is eccentric, and only the tenth-rate who is unintelligible.

But if one is driven to a warm sympathy with the lumdrum and decently dull, by contemplating the absurdities and vagaries of men of real genius, even more decidedly is that result produced by contemplating the ridiculous little curvetings and prancings of affectedly eccentric men of no genius. You know, my reader, the provincial celebrity of daily life; you know what a nuisance he is. You know how almost every little country town in Britain has its eminent man — its man of letters. He has written a book, or it is whispered that he writes in certain periodicals, and simple human beings, who know nothing of proof-sheets, look upon him with a certain awe. He varies in age and appearance. If young, he wears a moustache and long, dishevelled hair; if old, a military cloak, which he disposes in a brigand form. He walks the street with an abstracted air, as though his thoughts were wandering beyond the reach of the throng. He is fond of solitude, and he gratifies his taste by going to the most frequented places within reach, and there assuming a look of rapt isolation. Sometimes he may be seen to gesticulate wildly, and to dig his umbrella into the pavement as though it were a foeman's breast. Occasionally moody laughter may be heard to proceed from him, as from one haunted by fearful thoughts. His fat and rosy countenance somewhat belies the anguish which is preying upon his vitals. He goes much to tea-parties, where he tells the girls that the bloom of life has gone for

him, and drops dark hints of the mental agony he endures in reviewing his earlier life. He bids them not to ask what is the grief that consumes him, but to be thankful that they do not, cannot know. He drops hints how the spectres of the past haunt him at the midnight hour: how conscience smites him with chilly hand for his youthful sins. The truth is that he was always a very quiet lad, and never did any harm to anybody. Occasionally, when engaged in conversation with some one on whom he wishes to make an impression, he exclaims, suddenly, 'Hold! let me register that thought.' He pauses for a minute, gazing intently on the heavens; then exclaims, 'Tis done!' and takes up the conversation where it was interrupted. He fancies that his companion thinks him a great genius. His companion, in fact, thinks him a poor silly fool.

And now, my friend, turning away from these matters, let us sit down on this large stone, warm in the April sunshine, by the river side. Swiftly the river glides away. The sky is bright blue, the water is crystal clear, and a soft wind comes through those budding branches. In the field on the other side I see a terrier and a cow. The terrier frisks about; solemnly stands the cow. Let us think here for a while; we need not talk. And for an accompaniment to the old remembrances which such a day as this brings back, let us have the sound of that flowing river.



CHAPTER XIII.

CONCERNING GROWING OLD.

I WAS sitting, on a very warm and bright summer morning, upon a gravestone in the churchyard. It was a flat gravestone, elevated upon four little pillars, and covering the spot where sleeps the mortal part of a venerable clergyman who preceded me in my parish, and who held the charge of it for sixty years. I had gone down to the churchyard, as usual, for a while after breakfast, with a little companion, who in those days was generally with me wherever I went. And while she was walking about, attended by a solemn dog, I sat down in the sunshine on the stone, gray with lichen, and green with moss. I thought of the old gentleman who had slept below for fifty years. I wondered if he had sometimes come to the churchyard after breakfast before he began his task of sermon-writing. I reflected how his heart, mouldered into dust, was now so free from all the little heats and worries which will find their way into even the quietest life in this world. And sitting there, I put my right hand upon the mossy stone. The contrast of the hand upon the green surface caught the eye of my companion, who was not four years old. She came slowly up, and laid down her own hand beside mine on the mossy expanse. And after

looking at it in various ways for several minutes, and contrasting her own little hand with the weary one which is now writing this page, she asked, thoughtfully and doubtfully, — Was your hand ever a little hand like mine?

Yes, I said, as I spread it out on the stone, and looked at it: it seems a very short time since that was a little hand like yours. It was a fat little hand: not the least like those thin fingers and many wrinkles now. When it grew rather bigger, the fingers had generally various deep cuts, got in making and rigging ships: those were the days when I intended to be a sailor. It gradually grew bigger, as all little hands will do, if spared in this world. And now, it has done a great many things. It has smoothed the heads of many children, and the noses of various horses. It has travelled, I thought to myself, along thousands of written pages. It has paid away money, and occasionally received it. In many things that hand has fallen short, I thought; yet several things which that hand found to do, it did with its might. So here, I thought, were three hands, not far apart. There was the little hand of infancy; four daisies were lying near it on the gravestone where it was laid down to compare with mine. Then the rather skinny and not very small hand, which is doing now the work of life. And a couple of yards beneath, there was another hand, whose work was over. It was a hand which had written many sermons, preached in that plain church; which had turned over the leaves of the large pulpit-Bible (very old and shabby) which I turn over now; which had often opened the door of the house where now I live. And when I got up from the gravestone, and was walking quietly homeward, many thoughts came into my mind

CONCERNING GROWING OLD.

And, indeed, many of the most affecting thoughts which can ever enter the human mind are concerning the lapse of Time, and the traces which its lapse leaves upon human beings. There is something that touches us in the bare thought of Growing Old. I know a house on certain of whose walls there hang portraits of members of the family for many years back. It is not a grand house, where, to simple minds, the robes of brocade and the suits of armour fail to carry home the idea of real human beings. It is the house of a not wealthy gentleman. The portraits represent people whose minds did not run much upon deep speculations or upon practical politics; but who, no doubt, had many thoughts as to how they should succeed in getting the ends to meet. With such people does the writer feel at home: with such, probably, does the majority of his readers. I remember, there, the portrait of a frail old lady, plainly on the furthest confines of life. More than fourscore years had left their trace on the venerable head: you could fancy you saw the aged hands shaking. Opposite there hung the picture of a blooming girl, in the fresh May of beauty. The blooming girl was the mother of the venerable dame of fourscore. Painting catches but a glimpse of time; but it keeps that glimpse. On the canvas the face never grows old. As Dekker has it, 'False colours last after the true be fled.' I have often looked at the two pictures, in a confused sort of reverie. If you ask what it is that I thought of in looking at them, I truly cannot tell you. The fresh young beauty was the mother: the aged grand-dame was the child: *that* was really all. But there are certain thoughts upon which you can vaguely brood for a long time.

You remember reading how upon a day, not many

years since, certain miners, working far under ground, came upon the body of a poor fellow who had perished in the suffocating pit forty years before. Some chemical agent, to which the body had been subjected — an agent prepared in the laboratory of nature — had effectually arrested the progress of decay. They brought it up to the surface : and for a while, till it crumbled away, through exposure to the atmosphere, it lay there, the image of a fine sturdy young man. No convulsion had passed over the face in death : the features were tranquil ; the hair was black as jet. No one recognized the face ; a generation had grown up since the day on which the miner went down his shaft for the last time. But a tottering, old woman, who had hurried from her cottage at hearing the news, came up : and she knew again the face which through all these years she had never quite forgot. The poor miner was to have been her husband the day after that on which he died. They were rough people, of course, who were looking on : a liberal education and refined feelings are not deemed essential to the man whose work it is to get up coals, or even tin : but there were no dry eyes there when the gray-headed old pilgrim cast herself upon the youthful corpse, and poured out to its deaf ear many words of endearment, unused for forty years. It was a touching contrast : the one so old, the other so young. They had both been young, these long years ago : but time had gone on with the living, and stood still with the dead. It is difficult to account for the precise kind and degree of feeling with which we should have witnessed the little picture. I state the fact : I can say no more. I mention it in proof of my principle, that a certain vague pensiveness is the result of musing upon the lapse of time ; and a certain undefinable pathos of

any incident which brings strongly home to us that lapse and its effects

' In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree:
And thus the dear old man replied,
The gray-haired man of glee:

"No check, no stay, that streamlet fears —
How merrily it goes?
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard."'

That is really the sum of what is to be said on the subject. And it has always appeared to me that Mr. Dickens has shown an amount of philosophical insight which does not always characterize him, when he wrote certain reflections, which he puts in the mouth of one Mr. Roker, who was a turnkey in the Fleet Prison. I do not know why it should be so; but these words are to me more strikingly truthful than almost any others which the eminent author ever produced:—

"You remember Tom Martin, Neddy? Bless my dear eyes," said Mr. Roker, shaking his head slowly from side to side, and gazing abstractedly out of the grated window before him, as if he were fondly recalling some peaceful scene of his early youth, "it seems but yesterday that he whopped the coal-heaver down at the Fox-under-the-Hill, by the wharf there. I think I can see him now a-coming up the Strand between two street-keepers, a little sobered by the bruising, with a patch o' vinegar and brown paper over his right eyelid, and that 'ere lovely bull-dog, as pinned the little boy arterwards, a follow-ing at his heels. What a rum thing Time is, aint it, Neddy?"'

Here we find, truthfully represented, an essential mood of the human mind. It is a more pleasing picture, perhaps, that comes back upon us in startling freshness, making us wonder if it is really so long ago since then, and our sentiment with regard to time is more elegantly expressed; but it really comes to this. You can say no more of time than that it is a strange, undefinable, inexplicable thing; and when, by some caprice of memory, some long-departed scene comes vividly back, what more definite thing can you do than just shake your head, and gaze abstractedly, like Mr. Roker? Like distant bells upon the breeze, some breath from childhood shows us plainly for a moment the little thing that was ourself. What more can you do but look at the picture, and feel that it is strange? More important things have been forgotten; but you remember how, when you were four years old, you ran a race along a path with a green slope beside it, and watched the small shadow keeping pace with you along the green slope; or you recall the precise feeling with which you sat down in the railway carriage on the day when you first came home from school for the holidays, and felt the train glide away. And when these things return, what can you do but lean your head upon your hand, and vaguely muse and feel? I have always much admired the truthful account of the small boy's fancies, as he sits and gazes into the glowing fire 'with his wee round face.' Mr. Ballantine is a true philosopher as well as a true poet.

'For a' sae sage he looks, what can the laddie ken?

He's THINKIN' UPON NAETHING, like mony mighty men!'

We can all 'think of naething,' and think of it for a long time, while yet the mind is by no means a blank.

It is very easy, in one sense, to grow old. You have

but to sit still and do nothing, and time passing over you will make you old. But to grow old wisely and genially, is one of the most difficult tasks to which a human being can ever set himself. It is very hard to make up your mind to it. Some men grow old, struggling and recalcitrating, dragged along against their will, clinging to each birthday as the drowning man catches at an overhanging bough. Some folk grow old, gracefully and fittingly. "I think that, as a general rule, the people who least reluctantly grow old, are worthy men and women, who see their children growing up into all that is good and admirable, with equal steps to those by which they feel themselves to be growing downward. A better, nobler, and happier self, they think, will take their place; and in all the success, honour, and happiness of that new self, they can feel a purer and worthier pride than they ever felt in their own. But the human being who has no one to represent him when he is gone, will naturally wish to put off the time of his going as long as may be. It seems to be a difficult thing to hit the medium between clinging foolishly to youth and making an affected parade of age. Entire naturalness upon this subject appears to be very hard of attainment. You know how many people, men as well as women, pretend to be younger than they really are. I have found various motives lead to this pretence. I have known men, distinguished at a tolerably early age in some walk of intellectual exertion, who in announcing their age (which they frequently did without any necessity), were wont to deduct three or five years from the actual tale, plainly with the intention of making their talent and skill more remarkable, by adding the element of these being developed at a wonderfully early stage of life. They wished to be

recognized as infant phenomena. To be an eloquent preacher is always an excellent thing; but how much more wonderful if the preacher be no more than twenty-two or twenty-three. To repeat *The Battle of Hohenlinden* is a worthy achievement, but the foolish parent pats his child's head with special exultation, as he tells you that his child, who has just repeated that popular poem, is no more than two years old. It is not improbable that the child's real age is two years and eleven months. It is very likely that the preacher's real age is twenty-eight. I remember hearing of a certain clerical person who, presuming on a very youthful aspect, gave himself out as twenty-four, when in fact he was thirty. I happened accidentally to see the register of that individual's baptism, which took place five years before the period at which he said he was born. The fact of this document's existence was made known to the man, by way of correcting his singular mistake. He saw it; but he clung to the fond delusion; and a year or two afterwards I read with much amusement in a newspaper some account of a speech made by him, into which account was incorporated an assurance that the speech was the more remarkable, inasmuch as the youthful orator was no more than twenty-four! Very, very contemptible, you say; and I entirely agree with you. And apart from the dishonesty, I do not think that judicious people will value very highly the crude fruit which has been forced to a certain ripeness before its time. Let us have the mature thing. Give us intellectual beef rather than intellectual veal. In the domain of poetry, great things have occasionally been done at a very early age; for you do not insist upon sound and judicious views of life in poetry. For plain sense and practical guidance, you go elsewhere. But in every other

department of literature, the value of a production is in direct proportion to the amount of the experience which it embodies. A man can speak with authority only of that which he has himself felt and known. A man cannot paint portraits till he has seen faces. And all feeling, and most moods of mind, will be very poorly described by one who takes his notion of them at second-hand. When you are very young yourself, you may read with sympathy the writings of very young men; but when you have reached maturity, and learned by experience the details and realities of life, you will be conscious of a certain indefinable want in such writings. And I do not know that this defect can be described more definitely than by saying that the entire thing is veal, not beef. You have the immature animal. You have the 'berries harsh and crude.'

But long after the period at which it is possible to assume the position of the infant phenomenon, you still find many men anxious to represent themselves as a good deal younger than they are. To the population of Britain generally, ten years elapse before one census is followed by the next; but some persons, in these ten years, grow no more than two or three years older. Let me confess to an extreme abhorrence of such men. Their conduct affects me with an indescribable disgust. I dislike it more than many things which in themselves are probably more evil morally. Such men are, in the essential meaning of the word, *humbugs*. They are shams; impostures; false pretences. They are an embodied falsehood; their very personality is a lie; and you don't know what about them may next prove to be a deception. Looking at a man who says he is forty-three when in fact he is above sixty I suspect him all over. I am in doubt whether his hair

his teeth, his eyes, are real, I do not know whether that breadth of chest be the development of manly bone and muscle, or the skilful padding of the tailor. I am not sure how much is the man, and how much the work of his valet. I suspect that his whiskers and moustache are dyed. I look at his tight boots and think how they must be tormenting his poor old corny feet. I admire his affected buoyancy of manner, and think how the miserable creature must collapse when he finds himself alone, and is no longer compelled by the presence of company to put himself on the stretch, and carry on that wretched acting. When I see the old reptile whispering in a corner to a girl of eighteen, or furtively squeezing her in a waltz, I should like extremely to take him by the neck, and shake him till he came into the pieces of which he is made up. And when I have heard (long ago) such a one, with a hideous gloating relish telling a profane or indecent story; or instilling cynical and impious notions of life and things into the minds of young lads; or (more disgusting still) using phrases of double meaning in the presence of innocent young women, and enjoying their innocent ignorance of his sense; I have thought that I was beholding as degraded a phase of human nature as you will find on the face of this sinful world. O venerable age, gray, wise, kindly, sympathetic; before which I shall never cease reverently to bend, respecting even what I may (wrongly perhaps) esteem your prejudices; that *you* should be caricatured and degraded in that foul, old leering satyr! And if there be a thing on earth that disgusts one more than even the thought of the animal himself, it is to think of ministers of religion (prudently pious) who will wait meekly in his ante-chamber and sit humbly at his table, because he is an earl or a duke!

But though all this be so, there is a sense in which I interpret the clinging to youth, in which there is nothing contemptible about it, but much that is touching and pleasing. I abominate the padded, rouged, dyed old sham; but I heartily respect the man or woman, pensive and sad, as some little circumstance has impressed upon them the fact that they are growing old. A man or woman is a fool, who is indignant at being called *the old lady* or *the old gentleman* when these phrases state the truth; but there is nothing foolish or unworthy when some such occurrence brings it home to us, with something of a shock, that we are no longer reckoned among the young, and that the innocent and impressionable days of childhood (so well remembered) are beginning to be far away. We are drawing nearer, we know, to certain solemn realities of which we speak much and feel little; the undiscovered country (humbly sought through the pilgrimage of life) is looming in the distance before. We feel that life is not long, and is not commonplace, when it is regarded as the portal to eternity. And probably nothing will bring back the season of infancy and early youth upon any thoughtful man's mind so vividly as the sense that he is growing old. How short a time since then! You look at your great brown hand. It seems but yesterday since a boy-companion (gray now) tried to print your name upon the little paw, and there was not room. You remember it (it is five-and-twenty years since?) as it looked when laid on the head of a friendly dog, two or three days before you found him poisoned and dead; and helped, not without tears, to bury him in the garden under an apple-tree. You see, as plainly as if you saw it now, his brown eye, as it looked at you in life for the last time. And as you feel these things, you quite

unaffectedly and sincerely put off, time after time, the period at which you will accept it as a fact, that you are old. Twenty-eight, thirty, thirty-five, forty-eight, mark years on reaching which you will still feel yourself young; many men honestly think that sixty-five or sixty-eight is the prime of life. A less amiable accompaniment of this pleasing belief is often found in a disposition to call younger men (and not very young) *boys*. I have heard that word uttered in a very spiteful tone, as though it were a name of great reproach. There are few epithets which I have ever heard applied in a manner betokening greater bitterness, than that of a *clever lad*. You remember how Sir Robert Walpole hurled the charge of youth against Pitt. You remember how Pitt (or Dr. Johnson for him) defended himself with great force of argument against the imputation. Possibly in some cases envy is at the root of the matter. Not every man has the magnanimity of Sir Bulwer Lytton, who tells us so frankly and so often how much he would like to be young again if he could.

To grow old is so serious a matter, that it always appears to me as if there were something like profanation in putting the fact or its attendant circumstances in a ludicrous manner. It is not a fit thing to joke about. A funny man might write a comic description of the way in which starving sailors on a raft used up their last poor allotments of bread and water, and watched with sinking hearts their poor stock decrease. Or he might record in a fashion that some people would laugh at, the gradual sinking of a family which had lost its means through degree after degree in the social scale, till the work-house was reached at last. But I do not think there is anything really amusing in the spectacle of a human

being giving up hold after hold to which he had clung, and sinking always lower and lower ; and there is no doubt that, in a physical sense, we soon come to do all that in the process of growing old. And though you may put each little mortification, each petty coming down, in a way amusing to bystanders, it should always be remembered that each may imply a severe pang on the part of the man himself. We smile when Mr. Dickens tells us concerning his hero, Mr. Tupman, that

‘Time and feeding had expanded that once romantic form; the black silk waistcoat had become more and more developed; inch by inch had the gold watch-chain beneath it disappeared from within the range of Tupman’s vision; and gradually had the capacious chin encroached upon the borders of the white cravat; but the soul of Tupman had known no change.’

Now, although Mr. Tupman was an exceedingly fat man physically, and morally (to say the truth) a very great fool, you may rely upon it that as each little circumstance had occurred which his biographer has recorded, it would be a very serious circumstance in the feeling of poor Tupman himself. And this not nearly so much for the little personal mortification implied in each step of expanding bulk and lessening agility, but because each would be felt as a milestone marking the progress of Tupman from his cradle to his grave. Each would be something to signify that the innocence and freshness of childhood were left so much further behind, and that the reality of life was growing more hard and prosaic. It is some feeling like this which makes it a sad thing to lay aside an old coat which one has worn for a long time. It is a decided step. Of course we all know that time goes on as fast when its progress is unmarked as when it is noted. And each day that the coat went on was an

onward stage as truly as the day when the coat went off; but in this world we must take things as they are to our feelings: and there is something that very strongly appeals to our feeling in a decided beginning or a decided ending. Do not laugh, thoughtless folk, at the poor old maid, who persists in going bareheaded long after she ought to have taken to caps. You cannot know how much further away that change would make her days of childhood seem: how much more remote and dim and faint it would make the little life, the face, the voice of the young brother or sister that died when they both were children together. Do not fancy that it is mere personal vanity which prompts that clinging to apparent youth: feelings which are gentle, pure and estimable may protest against any change from the old familiar way. Do not smile at the phrases of the house when there are gray-headed *boys*, and *girls* on the lower side of forty-five; it would be a terrible sacrifice, it would make a terrible change, to give up the old names. You thoughtless young people are ready to deride Mr. Smith when he appears in his new wig. You do not think how, when poor Smith went to Truefitt's to get it, he thought many thoughts of the long-departed mother, whom he remembers dimly on her sick-bed smoothing down her little boy's hair, thick enough then. And when you see Mr. Robinson puffing up the hill with purpled face and labouring breath, do you think that poor Robinson does not remember the days when he was the best runner at school? Perhaps he tells you at considerable length about these days. Well, listen patiently: some day you may be telling long stories too. There is a peculiar sadness in thinking of exertions of body or mind to which we were once equal, but to which we are not equal now. You remember the not very earnest Swift, conscious that

the 'decay at the top' had begun, bursting into tears as he read one of his early works, and exclaiming, 'Heavens, what a genius I had when I wrote that!' What is there more touching than the picture of poor Sir Walter, wheeled like a child in a chair through the rooms at Abbotsford, and suddenly exclaiming, 'Come, this is sad idleness,' and insisting on beginning to dictate a new tale in which the failing powers of the great magician appeared so sadly, that large as its marketable value would have been, it never was suffered to appear in print. Probably the sense of enfeebled faculties is a sadder thing than the sense of diminished physical power. Probably Sir Isaac Newton, in his later days, when he sat down to his own mathematical demonstrations, and could not understand them or follow them, felt more bitterly the wear of advancing time than the grey-headed Highlander sitting on a stone at his cottage-door in the sunshine, and telling you how, long ago, he could breast the mountain with the speed of a deer; or than the crippled soldier, who leans upon his crutch, and tells how, many years ago, that shaky old hand had cut down the French cuirassier. But in either case it is a sad thing to think of exertions once put forth, and work once done, which could not be done or put forth now. Change for the worse is always a sorrowful thing. And the aged man, in the respect of physical power, and the capacity for intellectual exertion, has 'seen better days.' You do not like to think that in any respect you are falling off. You are not pleased at being told that ten years ago you wrote a plainer hand or spoke in a rounder voice. It is mortifying to find that whereas you could once walk at five miles an hour, you can now accomplish no more than three and a half. Now, in a hundred ways, at every turn, and by a host of little wounding facts, we are com-

pelled to feel as we grow old that we are falling off. As the complexion roughens, as the hair thins off, as we come to stoop, as we blow tremendously if we attempt to run, the man of no more than middle age is conscious of a bodily decadence. And advancing years make the wise man sadly conscious of a mental decadence too. Let us be thankful that if physical and intellectual decline must come at a certain stage of growing old, there are respects in which, so long as we live, we may have the comfort of thinking that we are growing better. The higher nature may daily be reaching a nobler development; when 'heart and flesh faint and fail,' when the clay tenement is turning frail and shattered, the better part within may show in all moral grace as but a little lower than the angels. Age need not necessarily be 'dark and unlovely,' as Ossian says it is; and the conviction that in some respect, that in the most important of all respects, we are growing better, tends mightily to strip age of that sense of falling off which is the bitterest thing about it. And as the essential nature of growing old; — its essence as a sad thing; — lies in the sense of decadence, the conviction that in almost anything we are gaining ground has a wonderful power to enable us cheerfully to grow old. A man will contentedly grow fatter, balder, and puffier, if he feels assured that he is pushing on to eminence at the bar or in politics; and if he takes his seat upon the woolsack even at the age of seventy-five, though he might now seek in vain to climb the trees he climbed in youth, or to play at leapfrog as then, still he is conscious that his life on the whole has been a progress; that he is on the whole better now than he was in those days which were his best days physically; that to be lord chancellor, albeit a venerable one, is, as the

world goes, a more eminent thing than to be the gayest and most active of midshipmen. And so on the whole he is content to grow old, because he feels that in growing he has not on the whole been coming down hill.

The supremely mortifying thing is, to feel that the physical decadence which comes with growing old, is not counterbalanced by any improvement whatsoever. We shall not mind much about growing less agile and less beautiful, if we think that we are growing wiser and better. The gouty but wealthy merchant, who hobbles with difficulty to his carriage, feels that after all he has made an advance upon those days in which, if free from gout, he was devoid of pence; and if he did not hobble, he had no carriage into which he might get in that awkward manner. The gray-haired old lady who was a beauty once, is consoled for her growing old, if in her age she is admitted to the society of the county, while in her youth she was confined to the society of the town. Make us feel that we are better in something, and we shall be content to be worse in many things; but it is miserable to think that in all things we are falling off, or even in all things standing still. A man would be very much mortified to think that at fifty he did not write materially better sermons, essays, or articles than he did at five-and-twenty. In many things he knows the autumn of life is a falling-off from its spring-time. He has ceased to dance; his voice quavers abominably when he tries to sing; he has no fancy now for climbing hills, and he shirks walks of forty miles a day. Perhaps deeper wrinkles have been traced by time on the heart than on the forehead, and the early freshness of feeling is gone. But surely, in mellowed experience, in sobered and sound views of things, in tempered expectations, in patience in

sympathy, in kindly charity, in insight into God's ways and dealings, he is better now a thousand times than he was then. He has worked his way through the hectic stage in which even able and thoughtful men fancy that Byron was a great poet. A sounder judgment and a severer taste direct him now; in all things, in short, that make the essence of the manly nature, he is a better and further advanced man than he ever was before. The physical nature says, by many little signs, WE ARE GOING DOWN HILL; the spiritual nature testifies by many noble gains and acquirements, WE ARE GOING ONWARD AND UPWARD! It seems to me that the clergyman's state of feeling must be a curious one, who, on a fine Sunday morning, when he is sixty, can take out of his drawer a sermon which he wrote at five-and-twenty, and go and preach it with perfect approval and without the alteration of a word. It is somewhat mortifying, no doubt, to look at a sermon which you wrote seven or eight years since, and which you then thought brilliant eloquence, and to find that in your present judgment it is no better than tawdry fustian. But still, my friend, even though you grudge to find that you must throw the sermon aside and preach it no more, are you not secretly pleased at this proof how much your mind has grown in these years? It is pleasant to think that you have not been falling off, not standing still. The wings of your imagination are somewhat clipped indeed, and your style has lost something of that pith which goes with want of consideration. Some youthful judges may think that you have sadly fallen off; but you are content in the firm conviction that you have vastly improved. It was veal then: it is beef now. I remember hearing with great interest how a venerable professor of fourscore wrote in the last few weeks of his

life a little course of lectures on a certain debated point of theology. He had outgrown his former notions upon the subject. The old man said his former lectures upon it did not do him justice. Was it not a pleasant sight — the aged tree bearing fruit to the last? How it must have pleased and soothed the good man amid many advancing infirmities to persuade himself (justly or unjustly) that in the most important respect he was going onward still!

It is indeed a pleasant sight to kindly onlookers, and it is a sustaining and consoling thing to the old man himself, when amid physical decadence there is intellectual growth. But this is not a common thing. As a general rule it cannot be doubted that, intellectually, we top the summit sometime before fourscore, and begin to go down hill. I do not wish to turn my essays into sermons; or to push upon my readers in *Fraser* things more fitly addressed to my congregation on Sundays: still, let me say that in the thought that growing old implies at last a decay both mental and bodily, and that unrelieved going down is a very sad thing to feel or to see, I find great comfort in remembering that as regards the best and noblest of all characteristics, the old man may be progressing to the last. In all those beautiful qualities which most attract the love and reverence of those around, and which fit for purer and happier company than can be found in this world, the aged man or woman may be growing still. In the last days, indeed, it may be ripening rather than growing: mellowing, not expanding. But to do *that* is to 'grow in grace.' And doubtless the yellow harvest-field in September is an advance upon the fresh green blades of June. You may like better to look upon the wheat that is pro-

gressing towards ripeness; but the wheat which has reached ripeness is not a falling off. The stalks will not bend now, without breaking; you rub the heads, and the yellow chaff that wraps the grain, crumbles off in dust. But it is beyond a question that there you see wheat at its best.

Still, not forgetting this, we must all feel it sad to see human beings as they grow old, retrograding in material comforts and advantages. It is a mournful thing to see: a man grow poorer as he is growing older, or losing position in any way. If it were in my power, I would make all barristers, above sixty, judges. They ought to be put in a situation of dignity and independence. You don't like to go into a court of justice, and there behold a thin, gray-headed counsel, somewhat shaken in nerve, looking rather frail, battling away with a full-blooded, confident, hopeful, impudent fellow, five-and-twenty years his junior. The youthful, big-whiskered, roaring, and bullying advocate is sure to be held in much the greater estimation by attorney's clerks. The old gentleman's day is over; but with lessening practice and disappointed hopes he must drive on at the bar still. I wish I were a chief justice, that by special deference and kindness of manner, I might daily soothe somewhat the feelings of that aging man. But it is especially in the case of the clergy that one sees the painful sight of men growing poorer as they are growing older. I think of the ease of a clergyman who at his first start was rather fortunate: who gets a nice parish at six-and-twenty: I mean a parish which is a nice one for a man of six-and-twenty: and who never gets any other preferment, but in that parish grows old. Don't we all know how pretty and elegant everything

was about him at first: how trim and weedless were his garden and shrubbery: how rosy his carpets, how airy his window-curtains, how neat though slight all his furniture: how graceful, merry, and nicely dressed the young girl who was his wife: how (besides hosts of parochial improvements) he devised numberless little changes about his dwelling: rustic bowers, moss-houses, green mounts, labyrinthine walks, fantastically trimmed yews, root-bridges over the little stream. But as his family increased, his income stood still. It was hard enough work to make the ends meet even at first, though young hearts are hopeful: but with six or seven children, with boys who must be sent to college, with girls who must be educated as ladies, with the prices of all things ever increasing, with multiplying bills from the shoemaker, tailor, dressmaker; the poor parson grows yearly poorer. The rosy face of the young wife has now deep lines of care: the weekly sermon is dull and spiritless: the parcel of books comes no more: the carpets grow threadbare but are not replaced: the furniture becomes creaky and rickety: the garden-walks are weedy: the bark peels off the rustic verandah: the moss-house falls much over to one side: the friends, far away, grow out of all acquaintance. The parson himself, once so precise in dress, is shabby and untidy now and his wife's neat figure is gone: the servants are of inferior class, coarse and insolent: perhaps the burden of hopeless debt presses always with its dull, dead weight upon the poor clergyman's heart. There is little spring in him to push off the invasion of fatigue and infection, and he is much exposed to both; and should he be taken away, who shall care for the widow and the fatherless, losing at once their head, their home,

their means of living? Even you, non-clerical reader, know precisely what I describe: hundreds have seen it: and such will agree with me when I say that there is no sadder sight than that of a clergyman, with a wife and children, growing poor as he is growing old. Oh, that I had the fortune of John Jacob Astor, that I might found, once for all, a fund that should raise forever above penury and degradation the widows and the orphans of rectory, vicarage, parsonage, and manse!

And even when the old man has none depending upon him for bread, to be provided from his lessening store, there is something inexpressibly touching and mournful in the spectacle of an old man who must pinch and scrimp. You do not mind a bit about a hopeful young lad having to live in humble lodgings up three pair of stairs; or about such a one having a limited number of shirts, stockings, and boots; and needing to be very careful and saving as to his clothes; or about his having very homely shaving-things, or hair-brushes which are a good deal worn out. The young fellow can stand all that: it is all quite right: let him bear the yoke in his youth: he may look forward to better days. Nor does there seem in the nature of things any very sad inconsistency in the idea of a young lad carefully considering how long his boots or great coat will last, or with what *minimum* of shirts he can manage to get on. But I cannot bear the thought of a grey-headed old man, with shaky hand and weary limb, sitting down in his lonely lodging, and meditating on such things as these: counting his pocket-handkerchiefs, and suspecting that one is stolen: or looking ruefully at a boot which has been cut where the upper leather joins the sole. Let not the aged man be worried with such petty details! Of course, my

reader, I know as well as you do, that very many aged people must think of these things to the last. All I say is, that if I had the ordering of things, no man or woman above fifty should ever know the want of money. And whenever I find a four-leaved shamrock, *that* is the very first arrangement I shall make. Possibly I may extend the arrangement further, and provide that no honest married man or woman shall ever grow early old through wearing eare. What a little end is sometimes the grand object of a human being's strivings through many weeks and months! I sat down the other day in a poor chamber, damp with much linen drying upon crossing lines. There dwells a solitary woman, an aged and infirm woman, who supports herself by washing. For months past her earnings have averaged three shillings a week. Out of that sum she must provide food and raiment; she must keep in her poor fire, and she must pay a rent of nearly three pounds a year. 'It is hard work, sir,' she said: 'it costs me many a thought getting together the money to pay my rent.' And I could see well, that from the year's beginning to its end, the thing always uppermost in that poor old widow's waking thoughts, was the raising of that great ineubus of a sum of money. A small end, you would say, for the chief thoughts of an immortal being! Don't you feel, gay young reader, for that fellow-creature, to whom a week has been a success, if at its elose she can put by a few halfpence towards meeting the term day? Would you not like to enrich her, to give her a light heart, by sending her a half-sovereign? If you would, you may send it to me.

It is well, I have said, for a man who is growing old,

if he is able to persuade himself that though physically going down hill, he is yet in some respect progressing. For if he can persuade himself that he is progressing in any one thing, he will certainly believe that he is advancing on the whole. Still, it must be said, that the self-complacency of old gentlemen is sometimes amusing (where not irritating) to their juniors. The self-conceit of many old men is something quite amazing. They talk incessantly about themselves and their doings; and, to hear them talk, you would imagine that every great social or political change of late years had been brought about mainly by their instrumentality. I have heard an elderly man of fair average ability, declare in sober earnest, that had he gone to the bar, he 'had no hesitation in saying' that he would have been chancellor or chief justice of England. I have witnessed an elderly man whom the late Sir Robert Peel never saw or heard of, declare that Sir Robert had borrowed from him his idea of abolishing the Corn-laws. I have heard an elderly mercantile man, who had gone the previous day to look at a small property which was for sale, remark that he had no doubt that by this time all the country was aware of what he had been doing. With the majority of elderly men, you can hardly err on the side of over-estimating the amount of their vanity. They will receive with satisfaction a degree of flattery which would at once lead a young man to suspect you were making a fool of him. There is no doubt that if a man be foolish at all, he always grows more foolish as he grows older. The most outrageous conceit of personal beauty, intellectual prowess, weight in the county, superiority in the regard of horses, wine, pictures, grapes, potatoes, poultry, pigs, and all other possessions, which I have ever

seen, has been in the case of old men. And I have known commonplace old women, to whom if you had ascribed queenly beauty and the intellect of Shakspeare, they would have thought you were doing them simple justice. The truth appears to be, not that the vanity of elderly folk is naturally bigger than that of their juniors, but that it is not mown down in that unsparing fashion to which the vanity of their juniors is subjected. If an old man tells you that the abolition of the slave-trade originated in his back-parlor, you may think him a vain, silly old fellow, but you do not tell him so. Whereas if a young person makes an exhibition of personal vanity, he is severely ridiculed. He is taught sharply that, however great may be his estimate of himself, it will not do to show it. 'Shut up, old fellow, and don't make a fool of yourself,' you say to a friend of your own age, should he begin to vapour. But when the aged pilgrim begins to boast, you feel bound to listen with apparent respect. And the result is, that the old gentleman fancies you believe all he tells you.

Not unfrequently, when a man has grown old to that degree that all his powers of mind and body are considerably impaired, there is a curious and touching mood which comes before an almost sudden breaking-down into decrepitude. It is a mood in which the man becomes convinced that he is not so very old; that he has been mistaken in fancying that the autumn of life was so far advanced with him; and that all he has to do in order to be as active and vigorous as he ever was, is to make some great change of scene and circumstances: to go back, perhaps, to some place where he had lived many years before, and there, as Dr. Johnson expresses it, to 'recoover youth in the fields where he once was

young. The aged clergyman thinks that if he were now to go to the parish he was offered forty years since, it would bring back those days again: he would be the man he was then. Of course, in most cases, such a feeling is like the leaping up of the flame before it goes out; it is an impulse as natural and as unreasonable as that which makes the dying man insist within an hour of his death on being lifted from his bed and placed in his easy-chair, and then he will be all right. But sometimes there really is in human feeling and life something analogous to the Martinmas summer in the year. Sometimes after we had made up our mind that we had grown old, it flashes upon us that we are not old after all: there is a real rejuvenescence. Happy days promote the feeling. You know that as autumn draws on, there come days on which it is summer or winter just as the weather chances to be fair or foul. And so there is a stage of life in which it depends mainly on a man's surroundings whether he shall be old or young. If unsuccessful, over-burdened, over-driven, lightly esteemed, with much depending upon him, and little aid or sympathy, a man may feel old at thirty-five. But if there still be a house where he is one of *the boys*: if he be living among his kindred and those who have grown up along with him: if he be still unmarried: if he have not lived in many different places, or in any place very far away: if he have not known many different modes of life, or worked in many kinds of work: than at thirty-five he may feel very young. There are men who at that age have never known what it is to stand upon their own legs in life, and to act upon their own responsibility. They have always had some one to tell them what to do. I can imagine

that towards the close of the ten years which Pistratus Caxton spent in Australia, far away from his parents and his home, and day by day obliged to decide and to manage for himself, he had begun to feel tolerably old. But when he came back again, and found his father and mother hardly changed in aspect; and found he chairs, and sofas, and beds, and possibly even the carpets, looking much as he had left them; those ten years, a vast expanse while they were passing over, would close up into something very small in the perspective; and he would feel with a sudden exultation that he was quite a young fellow yet.

It is wonderful what a vast amount of work a man may go through without its telling much upon him: and how many years he may live without feeling perceptibly older at their close. The years were long in passing; they look like nothing when past. If you were to go away, my friend, from London or Edinburgh, and live for five or six years in the centre of the Libyan desert; or in an island of the South Seas; or at an up-country station in India; there would be many evenings in those years on which you would feel as though you were separated by ages from the scenes and friends you knew. It would seem like a century since you came away; it would seem like an impossibility that you should ever be back again in the old place, looking and feeling much in the old way. But at length travelling on week after week, you come home again. You find your old companions looking just as before, and the places you knew are little changed. Miss Smith, a blooming young woman before you went out, is a blooming young woman still, and probably singing the same songs which you remember her singing then. Why, it

rushes upon you, you have been a very short time away ; you are not a day older ; it is a mere nothing to go out sperm-whaling for four or five years, or to retire for that period to a parish in the *Ultima Thule*. Life, after all, is so long, that you may cut a good large slice out of the earlier years of it without making it perceptibly less. When Macaulay returned from India after his years there, I have no doubt he felt this. And the general principle is true, that almost any outward condition or any state of feeling, after it has passed away, appears to us to have lasted a very much shorter time than it did when it was passing ; and it leaves us with the conviction that we are not nearly so old as we had fancied while it was passing. And the rejuvenescence is sometimes not merely in feeling, but in fact and in appearance. Have you not known a lady of perhaps three and thirty years married to an ugly old foggy of eighty-five, who, during the old foggy's life wore high dresses, and caps, that she might appear something like a suitable match for the old foggy ; but who instantly the ancient buffalo departed this life, cast aside her venerable trappings, and burst upon the world almost as a blooming girl, doubtless to her own astonishment no less than to that of her friends ? And you remember that pleasing touch of nature in the new series of *Friends in Council*, when Milverton, after having talked of himself as a faded widower, and appeared before us as one devoted to grave philosophic research, falls in love with a girl of two-and-twenty, and discovers that after all he is not so old. And I suppose it would be a pleasant discovery to any man, after he had fancied for years that the romantic interest had for him fled from life, to find that music could still thrill through him as of yore,

and that the capacity of spooniness was not at all obliterated. As Festus says,

‘Rouse thee, heart!
Bow of my life, thou yet art full of spring!
My quiver still hath many purposes.’

When Sir Philip Sidney tells us that in walking through the fields of his Arcadia, you would, among other pleasant sights and sounds, here and there chance upon a shepherd boy, ‘piping as if he would never grow old,’ you find the chivalrous knight giving his countenance to the vulgar impression that youth is a finer thing than age. And you may find among the *Twice-told Tales* of Nathaniel Hawthorne a most exquisite one called *The Fountain of Youth*, in which we are told of three old gentlemen and an old lady, who were so enchanted by tasting a draught which brought back the exhilaration of youth for half an hour, (though it led them likewise to make very great fools of themselves,) that they determined they would wander over the world till they should find that wondrous fountain, and then quaff its waters morning, noon, and night. And Thomas Moore, in one of his sweetest songs, warms for a minute from cold glitter into earnestness, as he declares his belief that no gains which advancing years can bring with them are any compensation for the light-heartedness and the passionate excitement which they take away. He says, —

‘Ne’er tell me of glories serenely adorning
The close of our day, the calm eve of our night:
Give me back, give me back the wild freshness of morning --
Its smiles and its tears are worth evening’s best light.’

And indeed it is to be admitted that in a life whose poetry is drawn from the domain of passion and imag-

ination, the poetry does pass away as imagination flags and the capacity of emotion dries up with advancing time. But the true philosopher among the three writers who have been mentioned, is Mr. Hawthorne. *He* shows us how the exhilaration, the *wild freshness* of the season when life is at blood-heat, partakes of the nature of intoxication; and he leaves us with the sober conviction that the truly wise man may well be thankful when he has got safely through that feverish season of temptation and of folly. Let us be glad if our bark has come (even a little battered) through the Mælostrom, by the Scylla and Charybdis, and is now sailing quietly upon a calm and tranquil sea. Wait till you are a little older, youthful reader, and you will understand that truth and soberness (how fitly linked together) are noble things. If you are a good man — let me say it at once, a Christian man — your latter days are better a thousand times than those early ones after which superficial and worldly folk whimper. The capacity of excitement is much lessened; the freshness of feeling and heart are much gone; though not, of necessity, so very much. You begin, like the old grandmother in that exquisite poem of Mr. Tennyson, ‘to be a little weary;’ the morning air is hardly so exhilarating, nor the frosty winter afternoon; the snowdrops and primroses come back, and you are disappointed that so little of the vernal joy come with them; you go and stand by the grave of your young sister on the anniversary of the day when she died, and you wonder that you have come to *feel* so little where once you felt so much. You preach the sermons you once preached with emotion so deep that it was contagious; but now the corresponding feeling does not come; you give them coldly; you are mortified at the contrast

between the warmth there is in the old words, and the chilliness with which you speak them. You hear of the death of a dear friend, and you are vexed that you can take it so coolly. But, O my brother, aging like myself, do you not know, in sober earnest, that for such losses as these, other things have brought abundant recompense? What a meaning there is now to you in the words of St. Austin — ‘Thou madst us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee!’ You are beginning to understand that St. Paul was right, when (even in the face of the fact that inexperienced youth is proverbially the most hopeful) he declared that in the truest sense ‘experience waketh hope.’ What a calm there is here! Passion is no longer the disturbing force it once was. Your eyes are no longer blinded to the truth of things by the glittering mists of fancy. You do your duty quietly and hopefully. You can bear patiently with the follies and the expectations of youth. I say it with the firmest assurance of the truth of what I say, that as he grows old, the wise man has great reason to thank God that he is no longer young. Truth and soberness are well worth all they cost. You won’t make a terrific fool of yourself any more. Campbell was not a philosopher, and possibly he was only half in earnest when he wrote the following verse; but many men, no longer young, will know how true it is:—

Hail, welcome tide of life, where no tumultuous billows roll,
How wondrous to myself appears this ‘calm of soul!’
The wearied bird blown o’er the deep would sooner quit its shore,
Than I would cross the gulf again that Time has brought me o’er!’

The dead are the only people that never grow old. There was something typical in the arrestment of time in the case of the youthful miner, of whom we have already


spoken. Your little brother or sister that died long ago remains in death and in remembrance the same young thing forever. It is fourteen years this evening since the writer's sister left this world. She was fifteen years old then — she is fifteen years old yet. I have grown older since then by fourteen years, but she has never changed as they advanced; and if God spares me to fourscore, I never shall think of her as other than the youthful creature she faded. The other day I listened as a poor woman told of the death of her first-born child. He was two years old. She had a small washing-green, across which was stretched a rope that came in the middle close to the ground. The boy was leaning on the rope, swinging backwards and forwards, and shouting with delight. The mother went into her cottage and lost sight of him for a minute; and when she returned the little man was lying across the rope, dead. It had got under his chin: he had not sense to push it away; and he was suffocated. The mother told me, and I believe truly, that she had never been the same person since; but the thing which mainly struck me was, that though it is eighteen years since then, she thought of her child as an infant of two years yet: it is a little child she looks for to meet her at the gate of the Golden City. Had her child lived he would have been twenty years old now; he died, and he is only two: he is two yet: he will never be more than two. The little rosy face of that morning, and the little half-articulate voice, would have been faintly remembered by the mother had they gradually died into boyhood and manhood: but that day stereotyped them: they remain unchanged.

Have you seen, my reader, the face that had grown old in life grow young after death? the expression of

many years since, lost for long, come out startlingly in the features, fixed and cold? Every one has seen it: and it is sometimes strange how rapidly the change takes place. The marks of pain fade out, and with them the marks of age. I once saw an aged lady die. She had borne sharp pain for many days with the endurance of a martyr; she had to bear sharp pain to the very last. The features were tense and rigid with suffering; they remained so while life remained. It was a beautiful sight to see the change that took place in the very instant of dissolution. The features, sharp for many days with pain, in that instant recovered the old aspect of quietude which they had borne in health: the tense, tight look was **gone**, you saw the signs of pain go out. You felt that all suffering was over. It was no more of course than the working of physical law: but in that ease it seemed as if there were a further meaning conveyed. And so it seems to me when the young look comes back on the departed Christian's face. Gone, it seems to say, where the progress of time shall no longer bring age or decay. Gone where there are beings whose life may be reckoned by centuries, but in whom life is fresh and young, and always will be so. Close the aged eyes! Fold the aged hands in rest. Their owner is no longer old!



CONCLUSION.

ND such, my friendly reader, are my RECREATIONS. It was pleasant to me, amid much work of a very different kind, to write these Essays. I trust that it has not been very tiresome for you to read them.

There is a peculiar happiness which is known to the essayist. There is a virtue about his work to draw the sting from the little worries of life. If you fairly look at some petty vexation of humanity in the face, and write an account of it, it will never annoy you so much any more. It recurs: and it annoys you: but you have a latent feeling of satisfaction at finding how exactly accurate was your description of it; how completely your present sensation runs into the mould you had made. It is a curious thing, too, that there is a certain pleasure in writing about a thing which was very unpleasant when it happened to one. You know how an artist makes a pleasing picture out of a poor cottage, in which it would be very disagreeable to live. You know how a great painter makes a picture, which you often like to look at, of an event at which you would not have liked to have been present. You pause for a long time before the representation of some boors drinking; or of a furious struggle in a guard-room; or of a murdered man lying dead. Now, in fact, you would have

got out of the way of such sights: the first two would have been disgusting: the last, at least a 'sorry sight.'

It is not quite a case in point, that we look with great interest and pleasure at the representation of a sight which it would have been no worse than sad to see. Such a sight may have been elevating as well as saddening. I see a figure laid upon a bed: you know it is stiff and cold. It is a female figure: there is a fixed but beautiful face. And through the open window I see in the west the summer sunset blazing, and the golden light falling upon the pale features, and the closed eyes which will never open more till the sun has ceased to shine. I do not wonder that the exquisite genius of the painter fixed on such a scene, and preserved it with rigid accuracy, and wrote beneath his picture such words as these:

The sun shall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw herself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

But there is in this one respect an entire analogy between the feeling of the artist and the feeling of the essayist: that to both, this world is to a certain extent transfigured by the fact, that to each, things become comparatively pleasing if they would please when described or depicted, though they might be unpleasing in fact. Not merely are those things good which are good in themselves: those things are good which, though bad, will please and interest when represented. It is extremely certain, that there is a pleasure in writing about what there is no pleasure in bearing: and here is a happiness of the essayist. You are grossly cheated, my friend, by

a man of most respectable character. You are worried by some glaring instance of that horrible dilatoriness, unfaithfulness, and stupidity, which come across the successful issue of almost all human affairs. You are vexed, in short, at seeing how creakingly and jarringly and uneasily the machine of life and society manages to blunder on. Well, you suffer; and you have no relief. But the essayist's painful feeling at such things is much mitigated when he thinks that here is a subject for him; and when he goes and describes it. Once, it was to me unrelieved and unalloyed pain to be cheated: or to listen to the vapouring of some silly person. Now, though still I cannot say I like it, still I dislike it less. I make a mental note. It will all go into an essay. One gets something of the spirit of the morbid anatomist, to whom some peculiar phase of disease is infinitely more interesting than commonplace health. Interesting wrong becomes (must I confess it?) a finer sight than uninteresting right. You know how country servants rejoice in coming to tell you that something is amiss: that a horse is lame, or a pig dying, or a field of potatoes blighted. It is something to tell about. Perhaps the essayist knows the peculiar emotion.

I sometimes have thought that the writer of fiction is to be envied. He has another life and world than that we see. He has a duality of being. He sits down to his desk; and in a little he is far away, and away in a world where he is absolute monarch. It has not been so with me. In writing these essays, I have not been rapt away into heroic times and distant scenes, and into romantic tracts of feeling. I have been writing amid daily work and worry, of daily work and worry; and of the little things by which daily work and worry are

intensified or relieved. I cannot pretend to long experience of life ; nor perhaps to much. But from a quiet and lonely life, little varied and very happy, I have sent out these essays month by month ; and I hope to send out more.

THE END.

THE RECREATIONS
OF A
COUNTRY PARSON.



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CHAPTER IX.		PAGE
CONCERNING MAN AND HIS DWELLING-PLACE		261
CHAPTER X.		
LIFE AT THE WATER-CURE		300
CHAPTER XI.		
CONCERNING FRIENDS IN COUNCIL		326
CHAPTER XII.		
CONCERNING THE PULPIT IN SCOTLAND		364
CHAPTER XIII.		
CONCERNING FUTURE YEARS		386
CHAPTER XIV.		
CONCLUSION		425



CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE PARSON'S CHOICE BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

ONE very happy circumstance in a clergyman's lot, is that he is saved from painful perplexity as regards his choice of the scene in which he is to spend his days and years. I am sorry for the man who returns from Australia with a large fortune ; and with no further end in life than to settle down somewhere and enjoy it. For in most cases he has no special tie to any particular place ; and he must feel very much perplexed where to go. Should any person who may read this page cherish the purpose of leaving me a hundred thousand pounds to invest in a pretty little estate, I beg that he will at once abandon such a design. He would be doing me no kindness. I should be entirely bewildered in trying to make up my mind where I should purchase the property. I should be rent asunder by conflicting visions of rich English landscape, and heathery Scottish hills : of seaside breezes, and inland meadows : of horse-chestnut avenues, and dark stern pine-woods. And after the estate had been bought, I should always be looking back and thinking I might have done better. So, on the whole, I would prefer that my reader should himself buy the estate, and

bequeath it to me : and then I could soon persuade myself that it was the prettiest estate and the pleasantest neighbourhood in Britain.

Now, as a general rule, the Great Disposer says to the parson, Here is your home, here lies your work through life : go and reconcile your mind to it, and do your best in it. No doubt there are men in the Church whose genius, popularity, influence, or luck is such, that they have a bewildering variety of livings pressed upon them : but it is not so with ordinary folk ; and certainly it was not so with me. I went where Providence bade me go, which was not where I had wished to go, and not where I had thought to go. Many who know me through the pages which make this and a preceding volume, have said, written, and printed, that I was specially cut out for a country parson, and specially adapted to relish a quiet country life. Not more, believe me, reader, than yourself. It is in every man who sets himself to it to attain the self-same characteristics. It is quite true I have these now : but, a few years since, never was mortal less like them. No cockney set down near Sydney Smith at Foston-le-Clay : no fish, suddenly withdrawn from its native stream : could feel more strange and cheerless than did I when I went to my beautiful country parish, where I have spent such happy days, and which I have come to love so much.

I have said that the parson is for the most part saved the labour of determining where he shall pitch his tent : his place and his path in life are marked out for him. But he has his own special perplexity and labour : quite different from those of the man to whom the hundred thousand pounds to invest in land are bequeathed : still, as some perhaps would think, no less hard. His work is

to reconcile his mind to the place where God has set him. Every mortal must, in many respects, face one of these two trials. There is all the world before you, where to choose; and then the struggle to make a decided choice, with which you shall on reflection remain entirely satisfied. Or there is no choice at all: the Hand above gives you your place and your work; and then there is the struggle heartily and cheerfully to acquiesce in the decree as to which you were not consulted.

And this is not always an easy thing; though I am sure that the man who honestly and Christianly tries to do it, will never fail to succeed at last. How curiously people are set down in the Church; and indeed in all other callings whatsoever! You find men in the last-places they would have chosen; in the last places for which you would say they are suited. You pass a pretty country church, with its parsonage hard-by embosomed in trees and bright with roses. Perhaps the parson of that church had set his heart on an entirely different kind of charge: perhaps he is a disappointed man, eager to get away, and (the very worst possible policy) trying for every vacancy of which he can hear. You think, as you pass by, and sit down on the churchyard wall, how happy you could be in so quiet and sweet a spot: well, if you are willing to do a thing, it is pleasant: but if you are struggling with a chain you cannot break, it is miserable. The pleasantest thing becomes painful, if it is felt as a restraint. What can be cosier than the warm environment of sheet and blanket which encircles you in your snug bed? Yet if you awake during the night at some alarm of peril, and by a sudden effort try at once to shake yourself clear of these trammels, you will, for the half-minute before you succeed, feel that soft restraint as irksome as

iron fetters. 'Let your will lead whither necessity would drive,' said Locke, 'and you will always preserve your liberty.' No doubt, it is wise advice; but how to do all that?

Well, it can be done: but it costs an effort. Great part of the work of the civilized and educated man consists of that which the savage, and even the uneducated man, would not regard as work at all. The things which cost the greatest effort may be done, perhaps, as you sit in an easy chair with your eyes shut. And such an effort is that of *making up our mind* to many things, both in our own lot, and in the lot of others. I mean not merely the intellectual effort to look at the success of other men and our own failure in such a way as that we shall be intellectually convinced that we have no right to complain of either: I do not mean merely the labour to put things in the right point of view: but the moral effort to look fairly at the facts not in any way disguised,—not tricked out by some skilful *art of putting things*;—and yet to repress all wrong feeling;—all fretfulness, envy, jealousy, dislike, hatred. I do not mean, to persuade ourselves that the grapes are sour; but (far nobler surely) to be well aware that they are sweet, and yet be content that another should have them and not we. I mean the labour, when you have run in a race and been beaten, to resign your mind to the fact that you have been beaten, and to bear a kind feeling towards the man who beat you. And this is labour, and hard labour; though very different from that physical exertion which the uncivilized man would understand by the word. Every one can understand that to carry a heavy portmanteau a mile is work. Not every one remembers that the owner of the portmanteau, as he walks on carrying nothing weightier than

an umbrella, may be going through exertion much harder than that of the porter. Probably St. Paul never spent days of harder work in all his life, than the days he spent lying blind at Damascus, struggling to get free from the prejudices and convictions of all his past years, and resolving on the course he would pursue in the years to come.

I know that in all professions and occupations to which men can devote themselves, there is such a thing as competition : and wherever there is competition, there will be the temptation to envy, jealousy, and detraction, as regards a man's competitors : and so there will be the need of that labour and exertion which lie in resolutely trampling that temptation down. You are quite certain, my friend, as you go on through life, to have to make up your mind to failure and disappointment on your own part, and to seeing other men preferred before you. When these things come, there are two ways of meeting them. One is, to hate and vilify those who surpass you, either in merit or in success : to detract from their merit and under-rate their success : or, if you must admit some merit, to bestow upon it very faint praise. Now, all this is natural enough ; but assuredly it is neither a right nor a happy course to follow. The other and better way is, to fight these tendencies to the death : to struggle against them, to pray against them : to resign yourself to God's good will : to admire and love the man who beats you. This course is the right one, and the happy one. I believe the greatest blessing God can send a man, is disappointment, rightly met and used. There is no more ennobling discipline : there is no discipline that results in a happier or kindlier temper of mind. And in honestly fighting against the evil impulses which have been men-

tioned, you will assuredly get help and strength to vanquish them. I have seen the plain features look beautiful, when man or woman was faithfully by God's grace resisting wrong feelings and tendencies, such as these. It is a noble end to attain, and it is well worth all the labour it costs, to resolutely be resigned, cheerful, and kind, when you feel a strong inclination to be discontented, moody, and bitter of heart. Well said a very wise mortal, 'Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.' And that ruling of the spirit which is needful to rightly meet disappointment, brings out the best and noblest qualities that can be found in man.

Sometimes, indeed, even in the parson's quiet life, he may know something of the first perplexity of which we have been thinking: the perplexity of the man who is struggling to make up his mind where he is to settle down for the remainder of life. And it is not long since such a perplexity came my way. For I had reached a spot in my onward path at which I must make a decided choice. I must go either to the right or the left: for, as Goldsmith has remarked with great force, when the road you are pursuing parts into several roads, you must be careful to follow only one. And I had to decide between country and town. I had to resolve whether I was to remain in that quiet cure of souls about which I formerly told you; or go into the hard work and hurry of a large parish in a certain great city.

I had been for more than five years in that sweet country place: it seemed a very long time as the days passed over. Even slow-growing ivy grew feet longer in that time, and climbing roses covered yards and yards of wall. And for very many months I thought that here I was to live and die, and never dreamt of change. Not indeed

that my tastes were always such. At the beginning of that term of years, when I went down each Sunday morning to preach in the plain little church to a handful of quiet rustic people, I used to think of a grand edifice where once upon a time, at my first start in my profession, I had preached each afternoon for many months to a very large congregation of educated folk ; and I used to wonder whether my old friends remembered and missed me. Once there was to me a fascination about that grand church, and all connected with it : now it is to me no more than it is to every one else, and I pass near it almost every day and hardly look at it. Other men have taken my old place in it, and had the like feelings, and got over them. Several of these men I never saw : how much I should like to shake each man's hand ! But all these fancies were long, long ago : I was pleased to be a country parson, and to make the best of it. Friends, who have held like stations in life, have you not felt, now and then, a little waking up of old ideas and aspirations ? All this, you thought, was not what you once had wished, and pictured to yourself. You vainly fancied, in your student days, that you might reach a more eminent place and greater usefulness. I know, indeed, that even such as have gone very unwillingly to a little remote country parish, have come most heartily to enjoy its peaceful life : have grown fond of that, as they never thought to do. I do not mean that you need affectedly talk, after a few months there, as if you had lived in the country all your life, and as if your thoughts had from childhood run upon horses, turnips, and corn. But in sober earnest, as weeks pass over, you gain a great interest in little country cares ; and you discover that you may be abundantly useful, and abundantly laborious, amid a small and simple population.

Yet sometimes, my clever friend, I know you sit down on a green bank, under the trees, and look at your little church. You think of your companions and competitors in College days, filling distinguished places in life: and, more particularly, of this and that friend in your own calling, who preaches to as many people on one Sunday as you do in half a year. Fine fellows they were: and though you seldom meet now, you are sure they are faithful, laborious, able, and devoted ministers: God bless them all! You wonder how they can do so much work; and especially how they have confidence to preach to so large and intelligent congregations. For a certain timidity, and distrust of his own powers, grows upon the country parson. He is reaching the juster estimate of himself, indeed: yet there is something not desirable in the nervous dislike to preach in large churches and to cultivated people which is sure to come. And little things worry him, which would not worry a mind kept more upon the stretch. It is possible enough that among the Cumberland hills, or in curacies like Sydney Smith's on Salisbury Plain, or wandering sadly by the shore of Shetland fiords, there may be men who had in them the makings of eminent preachers; but whose powers have never been called out, and are rusting sadly away: and in whom many petty cares are developing a pettiness of nature.

I have observed that in those advertisements which occasionally appear in certain newspapers, offering for sale the next presentation to some living in the Church, the advertiser, after pointing out the various advantages of the situation, frequently sums up by stating that the population of the parish is very small, and so the clergyman's duty very light. I always read such a statement with great displeasure. For it seems to imply, that a

clergyman's great object is, to enjoy his benefice and do as little duty as possible in return for it. I suppose it need not be proved, that if such were truly the great object of any parson, he has no business to be in the Church at all. Failing health, or powers overdriven, may sometimes make even the parson whose heart is in his work desire a charge whose duty and responsibility are comparatively small: but I firmly believe that in the case of the great majority of clergymen, it is the interest and delight they feel in their work, and not its worldly emolument, that mainly attach them to their sacred profession: and thus that the more work they have to do (provided their strength be equal to it), the more desirable and interesting they hold their charge to be. And I believe that the earnest pastor, settled in some light and pleasant country charge, will oftentimes, even amid his simple enjoyment of that pleasant life, think that perhaps he would be more in the path of duty, if, while the best years of his life are passing on, he were placed where he might serve his Master in a larger sphere.

And thinking now and then in this fashion, I was all of a sudden asked to undertake a charge such as would once have been my very ideal: and in that noble city where my work began, and so which has always been very dear. But I felt that everything was changed. Before these years of growing experience, I dare say I should not have feared to set myself even to work as hard; but now I doubted greatly whether I should prove equal to it. That time in the country had made me sadly lose confidence. And I thought it would be very painful and discouraging to go to preach to a large congregation, and to see it Sunday by Sunday growing less, as people got discontented and dropped away.

But happily, those on whom I leant for guidance and advice, were more hopeful than myself; and so I came away from my beautiful country parish. You know, my friends, who have passed through the like, the sorrow to look for the last time at each kind homely face: the sorrow to turn away from the little church where you have often preached to very small congregations: the sorrow to leave each tree you have planted, and the evergreens whose growth you have watched, year by year. Soon, you are in all the worry of what in Scotland we call a *flitting*: the house and all its belongings are turned upside down. The kindness of the people comes out with tenfold strength when they know how soon you are to part. And some, to whom you had tried to do little favours, and who had somewhat disappointed you by the slight sense of them they had shown, now testify by their tears a hearty regard which you never can forget.

The Sunday comes when you enter your old pulpit for the last time. You had prepared your sermon in a room from which the carpet had been removed, and amid a general confusion and noise of packing. The church is crowded in a fashion never seen before. You go through the service, I think, with a sense of being somewhat stunned and bewildered. And in the closing sentences of your sermon, you say little of yourself; but in a few words, very hard to speak, you thank your old friends for their kindness to you through the years you have passed together; and you give them your parting advice, in some sentence which seems to contain the essence of all you meant to teach in all these Sundays; and you say farewell, farewell.

You are happy, indeed, if after all, though quitting your country parsonage, and turning over a new leaf in

life, you have not to make a change so entire as that from country to town generally is: if, like me, you live in the most beautiful city in Britain: a city where country and town are blended together: where there are green gardens, fields, and trees: shady places into which you may turn from the glaring streets, into verdure as cool and quiet as ever, and where your little children can roll upon the grass, and string daisies as of old; streets, from every opening in which you look out upon blue hills and blue sea. No doubt, the work is very hard, and very constant; and each Sunday is a very exciting and exhausting day. You will understand, my friend, when you go to such a charge, what honour is due to those venerable men who have faithfully and efficiently done the duty of the like for thirty or forty years. You will look at them with much interest: you will receive their kindly counsel with great respect. You will feel it somewhat trying and nervous work to ascend your pulpit; and to address men and women who in mental cultivation, and in things much more important, are more than equal to yourself. And as you walk down, always alone, to church each Sunday morning, you will very earnestly apply for strength and wisdom beyond your own, in a certain Quarter where they will never be sought in vain. Yet you will delight in all your duty: and you will thank God you feel that were your work in life to choose again, you would give yourself to the noblest task that can be undertaken by mortal, with a resolute purpose firmer a thousand times than even the enthusiastie preference of your early youth. The attention and sympathy with which your congregation will listen to your sermons, will be a constant encouragement and stimulus; and you will find friends so

dear and true, that you will hope never to part from them while life remains. In such a life, indeed, these Essays, which never would have been begun had my duty been always such, must be written in little snatches of time: and perhaps a sharp critic could tell, from internal evidence, which of them have been written in the country and which in the town. I look up from the table at which I write: and the roses, honeysuckle, and the fuchsias, of a year since, are far away: through the window I discover lofty walls, whose colour inclines to black. Yet I have not regretted the day, and I do not believe I ever will regret the day, when I ceased to be a Country Parson.



CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING DISAPPOINTMENT AND SUCCESS.

RUSSET woods of Autumn, here you are once more ! I saw you, golden and brown, in the afternoon sunshine to-day. Crisp leaves were falling, as I went along the foot-path through the woods : crisp leaves lie upon the green graves in the churchyard, fallen from the ashes : and on the shrubby walks, crisp leaves from the beeches, accumulated where the grass bounds the gravel, make a warm edging, irregular, but pleasant to see. It is not that one is 'tired of summer : ' but there is something soothing and pleasing about the autumn days. There is a great clearness of the atmosphere sometimes ; sometimes a subdued, gray light is diffused everywhere. In the country, there is often, on these afternoons, a remarkable stillness in the air, amid which you can hear a withering leaf rustling down. I will not think that the time of bare branches and brown grass is so very near as yet ; Nature is indeed decaying, but now we have decay only in its beautiful stage, wherein it is pensive, but not sad. It is but early in October ; and we, who live in the country all through the winter, please ourselves with the belief that October is one of the finest months of the year, and that we have many warm, bright, still

days yet before us. Of course we know we are practising upon ourselves a cheerful, transparent delusion ; even as the man of forty-eight often declares that about forty-eight or fifty is the prime of life. I like to remember that Mrs. Hemans was describing October, when she began her beautiful poem on *The Battle of Mo jarten*, by saying that, ‘The wine-month shone in its golden prime :’ and I think that in these words the picture presented to the mind of an untravelled Briton, is not the red grapes hanging in blushing profusion, but rather the brown, and crimson, and golden woods, in the warm October sunshine. So, you russet woods of autumn, you are welcome once more ; welcome with all your peculiar beauty, so gently enjoyable by all men and women who have not used up life ; and with all your lessons, so unobtrusive, so touching, that have come home to the heart of human generations for many thousands of years. Yesterday was Sunday ; and I was preaching to my simple rustics an autumn sermon from the text *We all do fade as a leaf*. As I read out the text, through a half-opened window near me, two large withered oak-leaves silently floated into the little church in the view of all the congregation. I could not but pause for a minute till they should preach their sermon before I began mine. How simply, how unaffectedly, with what natural pathos they seemed to tell their story ! It seemed as if they said, Ah you human beings, something besides us is fading ; here we are, the things like which *you* fade !

And now, upon this evening, a little sobered by the thought that this is the fourth October which has seen this hand writing that which shall attain the authority of print, I sit down to begin an essay which is to be written leisurely as recreation and not as work. I need

not finish this essay, unless I choose, for six weeks to come: so I have plenty of time, and I shall never have to write under pressure. *That* is pleasant. And I write under another feeling, more pleasing and encouraging still. I think that in these lines I am addressing many unknown friends, who, though knowing nothing more of me than they can learn from pages which I have written, have come gradually not to think of me as a stranger. I wish here to offer my thanks to many whose letters, though they were writing only to a shadow, have spoken in so kindly a fashion of the writer's slight productions, that they have given me much enjoyment in the reading, and much encouragement to go on. To all my correspondents, whether named or nameless, I now, in a moral sense, extend a friendly hand. As to the question sometimes put, who the writer is, *that* is of no consequence. But as to what he is, I think, intelligent readers of his essays, you will gradually and easily see *that*.

It is a great thing to write leisurely, and with a general feeling of kindness and satisfaction with everybody; but there is a further reason why one should set to work at once. I feel I must write now, before my subject loses its interest; and before the multitude of thoughts, such as they are, which have been elustering round it since it presented itself this afternoon in that walk through the woods, have faded away. It is an unhappy thing, but it is the fact with many men, that if you do not seize your fancies when they come to you, and preserve them upon the written page, you lose them altogether. They go away, and never come back. A little while ago I pulled out a drawer in this table whereon I write - and I took out of it a sheet of paper, on

which there are written down various subjects for essays. Several are marked with a large cross; these are the essays which are beyond the reach of fate: they are written and printed. Several others have no cross; these are the subjects of essays which are yet to be written. But upon four of those subjects I look at once with interest and sorrow. I remember when I wrote down their names, what a vast amount, as I fancied, I had to say about them: and all experience failed to make me feel that unless those thoughts were seized and chronicled at once, they would go away and never come back again. How rich the subjects appeared to me, I well remember! Now they are lifeless, stupid things, of which it is impossible to make anything. Before, they were like a hive, buzzing with millions of bees. Now they are like the empty hive, when the life and stir and bustle of the bees are gone. O friendly reader, what a loss it was to you, that the writer did not at once sit down and sketch out his essays, *Concerning Things Slowly Learnt*; and *Concerning Growing Old*! And two other subjects of even greater value were, *Concerning the Practical Effect of Illogical Reasons*, and *An Estimate of the Practical Influence of False Assertions*. How the hive was buzzing when these titles were written down: but now I really hardly remember anything of what I meant to say, and what I remember appears wretched stuff. The effervescence has gone from the champagne; it is flat and dead. Still, it is possible that these subjects may recover their interest; and the author hereby gives notice that he reserves the right of producing an essay upon each of them. Let no one else infringe his vested claims.

There is one respect in which I have often thought

that there is a curious absence of analogy between the moral and the material worlds. You are in a great excitement about something or other; you are immensely interested in reaching some aim; you are extremely angry and ferocious at some piece of conduct; let us suppose. Well, the result is that you cannot take a sound, clear, temperate view of the circumstances; you cannot see the case rightly; you actually do see it very wrongly. You wait till a week or a month passes; till some distance, in short, intervenes between you and the matter; and then your excitement, your fever, your wrath, have gone down, as the matter has lost its freshness; and now you see the case calmly, you see it very differently indeed from the fashion in which you saw it first; you conclude that now you see it rightly. One can think temperately now of the atrocities of the mutineers in India. It does not now quicken your pulse to think of them. You have not now the burning desire you once felt, to take a Sepoy by the throat and cut him to pieces with a cat-of-nine-tails. The common consent of mankind has decided that you have now attained the right view. I ask, is it certain that in all cases the second thought is the best;—is the *right* thought, as well as the *calmest* thought? Would it be just to say (which would be the material analogy) that you have the best view of some great rocky island when you have sailed away from it till it has turned to a blue cloud on the horizon; rather than when its granite and heather are full in view, close at hand? I am not sure that in every case the calmer thought is the right thought, the distant view the right view. You have come to think indifferently of the personal injury, of the act of foul cruelty and falsehood, which once roused you to flam-

ing indignation. Are you thinking rightly too? Or has not just such an illusion been practised upon your mental view, as is played upon your bodily eye when looking over ten miles of sea upon Staffa? You do not see the basaltic columns now; but *that* is because you see wrongly. You do not burn at the remembrance of the wicked lie, the crafty misrepresentation, the cruel blow; but perhaps you ought to do so. And now (to speak of less grave matters) when all I had to say about *Growing Old* seems very poor, do I see it rightly? Do I see it as my reader would always have seen it? Or has it faded into falsehood, as well as into distance and dimness? When I look back, and see my thoughts as trash, is it because they *are* trash and no better? When I look back, and see Ailsa as a cloud, is it because it *is* a cloud and nothing more? Or is it, as I have already suggested, that in one respect the analogy between the moral and the material fails.

I am going to write *Concerning Disappointment and Success*. In the days when I studied metaphysics, I should have objected to that title, inasmuch as the antithesis is imperfect between the two things named in it. *Disappointment and Success* are not properly antithetic; *Failure and Success* are. Disappointment is the feeling caused by failure, and caused also by other things besides failure. Failure is the thing; disappointment is the feeling caused by the thing; while success is the thing, and not the feeling. But such minute points apart, the title I have chosen brings out best the subject about which I wish to write. And a very wide subject it is; and one of universal interest.

I suppose that no one will dispute the fact that in this world there are such things as disappointment and success.

I do not mean merely that each man's lot has its share of both ; I mean that there are some men whose life on the whole is a failure, and that there are others whose life on the whole is a success. You and I, my reader, know better than to think that life is a lottery ; but those who think it a lottery, must see that there are human beings who draw the prizes, and others who draw the blanks. I believe in Luck, and Ill Luck, as facts ; of course I do not believe the theory which common consent builds upon these facts. There is, of course, no such thing as chance ; this world is driven with far too tight a rein to permit of anything whatsoever falling out in a way properly fortuitous. But it cannot be denied that there are persons with whom everything goes well, and other persons with whom everything goes ill. There are people who invariably win at what are called games of chance. There are people who invariably lose. You remember when Sydney Smith lay on his deathbed, how he suddenly startled the watchers by it, by breaking a long silence with a sentence from one of his sermons, repeated in a deep, solemn voice, strange from the dying man. *His* life had been successful at last ; but success had come late ; and how much of disappointment he had known ! And though he had tried to bear up cheerily under his early cares, they had sunk in deep. 'We speak of life as a journey,' he said, 'but how differently is that journey performed ! Some are borne along their path in luxury and ease ; while some must walk it with naked feet, mangled and bleeding.'

Who is there that does not sometimes, on a quiet evening, even before he has attained to middle age, sit down and look back upon his college days, and his college friends ; and think sadly of the failures, the disappoint-

ments, the broken hearts, which have been among those who all started fair and promised well? How very much has after life changed the estimates which we formed in those days, of the intellectual mark and probable fate of one's friends and acquaintances! You remember the dense, stolid duncees of that time: you remember the men who sat next you in the lecture-room, and never answered rightly a question that was put to them: you remember how you used to wonder if they would always be the duncees they were then. Well, I never knew a man who was a dunce at twenty, to prove what might be called a brilliant or even a clever man in after life; but we have all known such do wonderfully decently. You did not expect much of them, you see. You did not try them by an exacting standard. If a monkey were to write his name, you would be so much surprised at seeing him do it at all, that you would never think of being surprised that he did not do it very well. So, if a man you knew as a remarkably stupid fellow preaches a decent sermon, you hardly think of remarking that it is very commonplace and dull, you are so much pleased and surprised to find that the man can preach at all. And then, the duncees of college days are often sensible, though slow and in this world, plain plodding common sense is very likely in the long run to beat erratic brilliancy. The tortoise passes the hare. I owe an apology to Lord Campbell for even naming him on the same page on which stands the name of dunce: for assuredly in shrewd massive sense, as well as in kindness of manner, the natural outflow of a kind and good heart, no judge ever surpassed him. But I may fairly point to his career of unexampled success as an instance which proves my principle. See how that man of parts which are sound and

solid, rather than brilliant or showy, has won the Derby and the St. Ledger of the law : has filled with high credit the places of Chief Justice of England and Lord Chancellor. And contrast his eminently successful and useful course with that of the fitful meteor, Lord Brougham. What a great, dazzling genius Brougham unquestionably is ; yet his greatest admirer must admit that his life has been a brilliant failure. But while you, thoughtful reader, in such a retrospect as I have been supposing, sometimes wonder at the decent and reasonable success of the dunce, do you not often lament over the fashion in which those who promised well, and even brilliantly, have disappointed the hopes entertained of them ? What miserable failures such have not unfrequently made ! And not always through bad conduct either : not always, though sometimes, by taking to vicious courses ; but rather by a certain want of tact and sense, or even by just somehow missing the favourable tide. You have got a fair living and a fair standing in the Church ; you have held them for eight or ten years ; when some evening as you are sitting in your study or playing with your children, a servant tells you, doubtfully, that a man is waiting to see you. A poor, thin, shabbily-dressed fellow comes in, and in faltering tones begs for the loan of five shillings. Ah, with what a start you recognise him ! It is the clever fellow whom you hardly beat at college, who was always so lively and merry, who sang so nicely, and was so much asked out into society. You had lost sight of him for several years ; and now here he is, shabby, dirty, smelling of whisky, with bloated face and trembling hand : alas, alas, ruined ! Oh, do not give him up. Perhaps you can do something for him. Little kindness he has known for very long. Give him the five shillings by all

means ; but next morning see you go out, and try what may be done to lift him out of the slough of despond, and to give him a chance for better days ! I know that it may be all in vain ; and that after years gradually darkening down you may some day, as you pass the police-office, find a crowd at the door, and learn that they have got the corpse of the poor suicide within. And even when the failure is not so utter as this, you find, now and then, as life goes onward, that this and that old acquaintance has, you cannot say how, stepped out of the track, and is stranded. He went into the Church : he is no worse preacher or scholar than many that succeed ; but somehow he never gets a living. You sometimes meet him in the street, threadbare and soured : he probably passes you without recognising you. O reader, to whom God has sent moderate success, always be chivalrously kind and considerate to such a disappointed man !

I have heard of an eminent man who, when well advanced in years, was able to say that through all his life he had never set his mind on anything which he did not succeed in attaining. Great and little aims alike, he never had known what it was to fail. What a curious state of feeling it would be to most men to know themselves able to assert so much ! Think of a mind in which disappointment is a thing unknown ! I think that one would be oppressed by a vague sense of fear in regarding one's self as treated by Providence in a fashion so different from the vast majority of the race. It cannot be denied that there are men in this world in whose lot failure seems to be the rule. Everything to which they put their hand breaks down or goes amiss. But most human beings can testify that their lot, like their abilities, their stature, is a sort of middling thing. There is about it an

equable sobriety, a sort of average endurableness. Some things go well : some things go ill. There is a modicum of disappointment : there is a modicum of success. But so much of disappointment comes to the lot of almost all, that there is no object in nature at which we all look with so much interest as the invariably lucky man — the man whom all this system of things appears to favour. You knew such a one at school : you knew him at college. you knew him at the bar, in the Church, in medicine, in politics, in society. Somehow he pushes his way : things turn up just at the right time for him : great people take a fancy to him : the newspapers cry him up. Let us hope that you do not look at him with any feeling of envy or bitterness ; but you cannot help looking at him with great interest, he is so like yourself, and at the same time so very unlike you. Philosophers tell us that real happiness is very equally distributed ; but there is no doubt that there is a tremendous external difference between the man who lives in a grand house, with every appliance of elegance and luxury, with plump servants, fine horses, many carriages, and the poor struggling gentleman, perhaps a married curate, whose dwelling is bare, whose dress is poor, whose fare is scanty, whose wife is careworn, whose children are ill-fed, shabbily dressed, and scantily educated. It is conceivable that fanciful wants, slights, and failures, may cause the rich man as much and as real suffering as substantial wants and failures cause the poor ; but the world at large will recognise the rich man's lot as one of success, and the poor man's as one of failure.

This is a world of competition. It is a world full of things that many people wish to get, and that all cannot get at once ; and to say this is much as to say that

this is a world of failure and disappointments. All things desirable, by their very existence imply the disappointment of some. When you, my reader, being no longer young, look with a philosophic eye at some pretty girl entering a drawing-room, you cannot but reflect, as you survey the pleasing picture, and more especially when you think of the twenty thousand pounds — Ah my gentle young friend, you will some day make one heart very jolly, but a great many more extremely envious, wrathful, and disappointed. So with all other desirable things; so with a large living in the Church; so with any place of dignity; so with a seat on the bench; so with the bishopric; so with the woolsack; so with the towers of Lambeth. So with smaller matters; so with a good business in the greengrocery line; so with a well-paying milk-walk; so with a clerk's situation of eighty pounds a year; so with an errand boy's place at three shillings a week, which thirty candidates want, and only one can get. Alas for our fallen race! Is it not part, at least, of some men's pleasure in gaining some object which has been generally sought for, to think of the mortification of the poor fellows that failed?

Disappointment, in short, may come and must come wherever man can set his wishes and his hopes. The only way not to be disappointed when a thing turns out against you, is not to have really cared how the thing went. It is not a truism to remark that this is impossible if you did care. Of course you are not disappointed at failing of attaining an end which you did not care whether you attained or not; but men seek very few such ends. If a man has worked day and night for six weeks in canvassing his county, and then, having been ignominiously beaten, on the following day tells you he

is not in the least degree disappointed, he might just as truly assure you, if you met him walking up streaming with water from a river into which he had just fallen, that he is not the least wet. No doubt there is an elasticity in the healthy mind which very soon tides it over even a severe disappointment; and no doubt the grapes which are unattainable do sometimes in actual fact turn sour. But let no man tell us that he has not known the bitterness of disappointment for at least a brief space, if he have ever from his birth tried to get anything, great or small, and yet not got it. Failure is indeed a thing of all degrees, from the most fanciful to the most weighty: disappointment is a thing of all degrees, from the transient feeling that worries for a minute, to the great crushing blow that breaks the mind's spring for ever. Failure is a fact which reaches from the poor tramp who lies down by the wayside to die, up to the man who is only made Chief Justice when he wanted the Chancellorship, or who dies Bishop of London when he had set his heart upon being Archbishop of Canterbury; or to the Prime Minister, unrivalled in eloquence, in influence, in genius, with his fair domains and his proud descent, but whose horse is beaten after being first favourite for the Derby. Who shall say that either disappointed man felt less bitterness and weariness of heart than the other? Each was no more than disappointed; and the keenness of disappointment bears no proportion to the reality of the value of the object whose loss caused it. And what endless crowds of human beings, children and old men, nobles and snobs, rich men and poor, know the bitterness of disappointment from day to day. It begins from the child shedding many tears when the toy bought with the long-hoarded pence is broken the first day it

comes home ; it goes on to the Duke expecting the Garter, who sees in the newspaper at breakfast that the yards of blue ribbon have been given to another. What a hard time his servants have that day. How loudly he roars at them, how willingly would he kick them ! Little reck he that forenoon of his magnificent castle and his ancestral woods. It may here be mentioned that a very pleasing opportunity is afforded to malignant people for mortifying a clever, ambitious man, when any office is vacant to which it is known he aspires. A judge of the Queen's Bench has died : you, Mr. Verjuice, know how Mr. Swetter, Q. C., has been rising at the bar ; you know how well he deserves the ermine. Well, walk down to his chambers ; go in and sit down ; never mind how busy he is — *your* time is of no value — and talk of many different men as extremely suitable for the vacant seat on the bench, but never in the remotest manner hint at the claims of Swetter himself. I have often seen the like done. And you, Mr. Verjuice, may conclude almost with certainty that in doing all this you are vexing and mortifying a deserving man. And such a consideration will no doubt be compensation sufficient to your amiable nature for the fact that every generous muscular Christian would like to take you by the neck, and swing your sneaking carcase out of the window.

Even a slight disappointment, speedily to be repaired, has in it something that jars painfully the mechanism of the mind. You go to the train, expecting a friend, certainly. He does not come. Now this worries you, even though you receive at the station a telegraphic message that he will be by the train which follows in two hours. Your magazine fails to come by post on the last day of the month ; you have a dull, vague sense of something

wanting for an hour or two, even though you are sure that you will have it next morning. And indeed a very large share of the disappointments of civilized life are associated with the post-office. I do not suppose the extreme ease of the poor fellow who calls at the office expecting a letter containing the money without which he cannot see how he is to get through the day; nor of the man who finds no letter on the day when he expects to hear how it fares with a dear relative who is desperately sick. I am thinking merely of the lesser disappointments which commonly attend post-time: the *Times* not coming when you were counting with more than ordinary certainty on its appearing; the letter of no great consequence, which yet you would have liked to have had. A certain blankness—a feeling difficult to define—attends even the slightest disappointment; and the effect of a great one is very stunning and embittering indeed. You remember how the nobleman in *Ten Thousand a Year*, who had been refused a seat in the Cabinet, sympathized with poor Titmouse's exclamation when, looking at the manifestations of gay life in Hyde-park, and feeling his own absolute exclusion from it, he consigned everything to perdition. All the ballads of Professor Aytoun and Mr. Theodore Martin are admirable, but there is none which strikes me as more so than the brilliant imitation of *Locksley Hall*. And how true to nature the state of mind ascribed to the vulgar snob who is the hero of the ballad, who, bethinking himself of his great disappointment when his cousin married somebody else, bestowed his extremest oburgations upon all who had abetted the hateful result, and then summed up thus comprehensively:—

Cursed be the foul apprentice, who his loathsome fees did earn;
Cursed be the clerk and parson; CURSED BE THE WHOLE CONCERN!

It may be mentioned here as a fact to which experience will testify, that such disappointments as that at the railway station and the post-office are most likely to come when you are counting with absolute certainty upon things happening as you wish ; when not a misgiving has entered your mind as to your friend's arriving or your letter coming. A little latent fear in your soul that you *may* possibly be disappointed, seems to have a certain power to fend off disappointment, on the same principle on which taking out an umbrella is found to prevent rain. What you are prepared for rarely happens. The precise thing you expected comes not once in a thousand times. A confused state of mind results from long experience of such cases. Your real feeling often is : Such a thing seems quite sure to happen ; I may say I expect it to happen ; and yet I don't expect it, because I do : for experience has taught me that the precise thing which I expect, which I think most likely, hardly ever comes. I am not prepared to side with a thoughtless world, which is ready to laugh at the confused statement of the Irishman who had killed his pig. It is not a bull ; it is a great psychological fact that is involved in his seemingly contradictory declaration — 'It did not weigh as much as I expected, *and I never thought it would !*'

When young ladies tell us that such and such a person has met with a disappointment,' we all understand what is meant. The phrase, though it is conventionally intelligible enough, involves a fallacy : it seems to teach that the disappointment of the youthful heart in the matter of that which in its day is no doubt the most powerful of all the affections, is by emphasis the greatest disappointment which a human being can ever know. Of course that is

an entire mistake. People get over *that* disappointment; not but what it may leave its trace, and possibly colour the whole of remaining life; sometimes resulting in an unlovely bitterness and hardness of nature; sometimes prolonging even into age a lingering thread of old romance, and keeping a kindly corner in a heart which worldly cares have in great measure deadened. But the disappointment which has its seat in the affections is outgrown as the affections themselves are outgrown, as the season of *their* predominance passes away; and the disappointment which sinks the deepest and lasts the longest of all the disappointments which are fanciful rather than material, is that which reaches a man through his ambition and his self-love, — principles in his nature which outlast the heyday of the heart's supremacy, and which endure to man's latest years. The bitter and the enduring disappointment to most human beings is that which makes them feel, in one way or other, that they are less wise, clever, popular, graceful, accomplished, tall, active, and in short fine, than they had fancied themselves to be. But it is only to a limited portion of human kind that such words as disappointment and success are mainly suggestive of gratified or disappointed ambition, of happy or blighted affection; to the great majority they are suggestive rather of success or non-success in earning bread and cheese, in finding money to pay the rent, in generally making the ends meet. You are very young, my reader, and little versed in the practical affairs of ordinary life, if you do not know that such prosaic matters make to most men the great aim of their being here, so far as that aim is bounded by this world's horizon. The poor cabman is successful or is disappointed, according as he sees, while the hours of the day are passing over, that he

is making up or not making up the shillings he must hand over to his master at night, before he has a penny to get food for his wife and children. The little tradesman is successful or the reverse, according as he sees or does not see from week to week such a small accumulation of petty profits as may pay his landlord, and leave a little margin by help of which he and his family may struggle on. And many an educated man knows the analogous feelings. The poor barrister, as he waits for the briefs which come in so slowly—the young doctor, hoping for patients—understand them all. Oh what slight, fanciful things, to such men, appear such disappointments as that of the wealthy proprietor who fails to carry his county, or the rich mayor or provost who fails of being knighted!

There is an extraordinary arbitrariness about the way in which great success is allotted in this world. Who shall say that in one case out of every two, relative success is in proportion to relative merit? Nor need this be said in anything of a grumbling or captious spirit. It is but repeating what a very wise man said long ago, that ‘the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.’ I suppose no one will say that the bishops are the greatest men in the Church of England, or that every Chief Justice is a greater man than every puisne judge. Success is especially arbitrary in cases where it goes by pure patronage: in many such cases the patron would smile at your weakness if you fancied that the desire to find the best man ever entered his head. In the matter of the bench and bar, where tangible duties are to be performed, a patron is compelled to a certain amount of decency; for, though he may not pretend to seek for the fittest man, he must at least pro-

ness to have sought a fit man. No prime minister dare appoint a blockhead a judge, without at least denying loudly that he is a blockhead. But the arbitrariness of success is frequently the result of causes quite apart from any arbitrariness in the intention of the human disposer of success; a Higher Hand seems to come in here. The tide of events settles the matter: the arbitrariness is in the way in which the tide of events sets. Think of that great lawyer and great man, Sir Samuel Romilly. Through years of his practice at the bar, he himself, and all who knew him, looked to the woolsack as his certain destination. You remember the many entries in his diary bearing upon the matter; and I suppose the opinion of the most competent was clear as to his unrivalled fitness for the post. Yet all ended in nothing. The race was not to the swift. The first favourite was beaten, and more than one outsider has carried off the prize for which he strove in vain. Did any mortal ever dream, during his days of mediocrity at the bar, or his time of respectability as a Baron of the Exchequer, that Sir R. M. Rolfe was the future Chancellor? Probably there is no sphere in which there is more of disappointment and heartburning than the army. It must be supremely mortifying to a grey-headed veteran, who has served his country for forty years, to find a beardless Guardsman put over his head into the command of his regiment, and to see honours and emoluments showered upon that fair-weather colonel. And I should judge that the despatch written by a General after an important battle must be a source of sad disappointment to many who fancied that their names might well be mentioned there. But after all, I do not know but that it tends to lessen disappointment, that success should be regarded as

going less by merit than by influence or good luck. The disappointed man can always soothe himself with the fancy that he deserved to succeed. It would be a desperately mortifying thing to the majority of mankind, if it were distinctly ascertained that each man gets just what he deserves. The admitted fact that the square man is sometimes put in the round hole, is a cause of considerable consolation to all disappointed men, and to their parents, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers.

No stronger proof can be adduced of the little correspondence that often exists between success and merit, than the fact that the self-same man, by the exercise of the self-same powers, may at one time starve and at another drive his carriage and four. When poor Edmund Kean was acting in barns to country bumpkins, and barely finding bread for his wife and child, he was just as great a genius as when he was crowding Drury Lane. When Brougham presided in the House of Lords, he was not a bit better or greater than when he had hung about in the Parliament House at Edinburgh, a briefless and suspected junior barrister. When all London crowded to see the hippopotamus, he was just the animal that he was a couple of years later, when no one took the trouble of looking at him. And when George Stephenson died, amid the applause and gratitude of all the intelligent men in Britain, he was the same man, maintaining the same principle, as when men of science and of law regarded as a mischievous lunatic the individual who declared that some day the railroad would be the king's highway, and mail-coaches would be drawn by steam.

As to the very highest prizes of human affairs, it is, I believe, admitted on all hands, that these generally fall to second-rate men. Civilized nations have found it

convenient entirely to give up the hallucination that the monarch is the greatest, wisest, and best man in his dominions. Nobody supposes *that*. And in the case of hereditary dynasties, such an end is not even aimed at. But it is curious to find how with elective sovereignties it is just the same way. The great statesmen of America have very rarely attained to the dignity of President of the United States. Not Clays and Websters have had their four years at the White House. And even Cardinal Wiseman candidly tells us that the post which is regarded by millions as the highest which can be held by mortal, is all but systematically given to judicious mediocrity. A great genius will never be Pope. The coach must not be trusted to too dashing a chariotcer. Give us the safe and steady man. Everybody knows that the same usage applies to the Primacy in England. Bishops must be sensible; but archbishops are by some regarded with suspicion if they have ever committed themselves to sentiments more startling than that two and two make four.

Let me suppose, my reader, that you have met with great success: I mean success which is very great in your own especial field. The lists are just put out, and you are senior wrangler; or you have got the gold medal in some country grammar-school. The feeling in both cases is the same. In each case there combines with the exultant emotion, an intellectual conception that you are one of the greatest of the human race. Well, was not the feeling a strange one? Did you not feel somewhat afraid? It seemed too much. Something was sure to come, you thought, that would take you down. Few are burdened with such a feeling; but surely there is something alarming in great success. You were a barber's boy: you are made a peer. Surely you must go through

life with an ever-recurring emotion of surprise at finding yourself where you are. It must be curious to occupy a place whence you look down upon the heads of most of your kind. A duke gets accustomed to it; but surely even he must sometimes wonder how he comes to be placed so many degrees above multitudes who deserve as well. Or do such come to fancy that their merit is equal to their success; and that by as much as they are better off than other men, they are better than other men? Very likely they do. It is all in human nature. And I suppose the times have been in which it would have been treasonable to hint that a man with a hundred thousand pounds a year was not at least two thousand times as good as one with fifty.

The writer always feels a peculiar sympathy with failure, and with people who are suffering from disappointment, great or small. It is not that he himself is a disappointed man. No; he has to confess, with deep thankfulness, that his success has far, very far, transcended his deserts. And, like many other men, he has found that one or two events in his life, which seemed disappointments at the time, were in truth great and signal blessings. Still, every one has known enough of the blank, desolate feeling of disappointment, to sympathize keenly with the disappointments of others. I feel deeply for the poor Punch and Judy man, simulating great excitement in the presence of a small, uninterested group, from which people keep dropping away. I feel for the poor barn-actor, who discovers, on his first entrance upon his rude stage, that the magnates of the district, who promised to be present at the performance, have not come. You have gone to see a panorama, or to hear a lecture on phrenology. Did you not feel for

the poor fellow, the lecturer or exhibitor, when he came in, ten minutes past the hour, and found little but empty benches? Did you not see what a chill fell upon him: how stupified he seemed: in short, how much disappointed he was? And if the money he had hoped to earn that evening was to pay the lodgings in which he and his wife were staying, you may be sure there was a heart sickness about his disappointment far beyond the mortification of mere self-love. When a rainy day stops a pic-nic, or mars the enjoyment of it, although the disappointment is hardly a serious one, still it is sure to cause so much real suffering, that only rancorous old ladies will rejoice in the fact. It is curious how men who have known disappointment themselves, and who describe it well, seem to like to paint lives which in the meantime are all hope and success. There is Mr. Thackeray. With what sympathy, with what enjoyment, he shows us the healthy, wealthy, hopeful youths, like Clive Newcome, or young Pendennis, when it was all sunshine around the young prince! And yet how sad a picture of life he gives us in *The Newcomes*. It would not have done to make it otherwise: it is true, though sad: that history of the good and gallant gentleman, whose life was a long disappointment, a long failure in all on which he had set his heart; in his early love, in his ambitious plans for his son, even in his hopes for his son's happiness, in his own schemes of fortune, till that life of honour ended in the almshouse at last. How the reader wishes that the author would make brighter days dawn upon his hero! But the author cannot: he must hold on unflinchingly as fate. In such a story as his, truth can no more be sacrificed to our wishes than in real life we know it to be. Well, all disappointment is discipline;

and received in a right spirit, it may prepare us for better things elsewhere. It has been said that heaven is a place for those who failed on earth. The greatest hero is perhaps the man who does his very best, and signally fails, and still is not embittered by the failure. And looking at the fashion in which an unseen Power permits wealth and rank and influence to go sometimes in this world, we are possibly justified in concluding that in His judgment the prizes of this Vanity Fair are held as of no great account. A life here, in which you fail of every end you seek, yet which disciplines you for a better, is assuredly not a failure.

What a blessing it would be, if men's ambition were in every case made to keep pace with their ability. Very much disappointment arises from a man's having an absurd over-estimate of his own powers, which leads him, to use an expressive Scotticism, to *even himself* to some position for which he is utterly unfit, and which he has no chance at all of reaching. A lad comes to the university who has been regarded in his own family as a great genius, and who has even distinguished himself at some little country school. What a rude shock to the poor fellow's estimate of himself; what a smashing of the hopes of those at home, is sure to come when he measures his length with his superiors; and is compelled, as is frequently the case, to take a third or fourth-rate position. If you ever read the lives of actors (and every one ought, for they show you a new and curious phase of life), you must have smiled to see the ill-spelled, ungrammatical letters in which some poor fellow writes to a London manager for an engagement, and declares that he feels within him the makings of a greater actor than

Garrick or Kean. How many young men who go into the Church fancy that they are to surpass Melvill or Chalmers! No doubt, reader, you have sometimes come out of a church, where you had heard a preacher aiming at the most ambitious eloquence, who evidently had not the slightest vocation that way; and you have thought it would be well if no man ever wished to be eloquent who had it not in him to be so. Would that the principle were universally true! Who has not sometimes been amused in passing along the fashionable street of a great city, to see a little vulgar snob dressed out within an inch of his life, walking along, evidently fancying that he looks like a gentleman, and that he is the admired of all admirers? Sometimes, in a certain street which I might name, I have witnessed such a spectacle, sometimes with amusement, oftener with sorrow and pity, as I thought of the fearful, dark surmises which must often cross the poor snob's mind, that he is failing in his anxious endeavours. Occasionally, too, I have beheld a man bestriding a horse in that peculiar fashion which may be described as his being on the outside of the animal, slipping away over the hot stones, possibly at a trot, and fancying (though with many suspicions to the contrary) that he is witching the world with noble horsemanship. What a pity that such poor fellows will persist in aiming at what they cannot achieve! What mortification and disappointment they must often know! The horse backs on to the pavement, into a plate-glass window, just as Maria, for whose sake the poor screw was hired, is passing by. The boys halloo in derision; and some ostler, helpful, but not complimentary, extricates the rider, and says, 'I see you have never been on 'ossback before; you should not have pulled the curb-bit that way!' And when the vulgar

dandy, strutting along, with his Brummagem jewellery his choking collar, and his awfully tight boots which cause him agony, meets the true gentleman, how it rushes upon him that he himself is only a humbug! How the poor fellow's heart sinks!

Turning from such inferior fields of ambition as these, I think how often it happens that men come to some sphere in life with a flourish of trumpets, as destined to do great things, and then fail. There is a modest, quiet self-confidence, without which you will hardly get on in this world; but I believe, as a general rule, that the men who have attained to very great success have started with very moderate expectations. Their first aim was lowly; and the way gradually opened before them. Their ambition, like their success, went on step by step; they did not go at the top of the tree at once. It would be easy to mention instances in which those who started with high pretensions have been taught by stern fact to moderate them; in which the man who came over from the Irish bar intending to lead the Queen's Bench, and become a Chief Justice, was glad, after thirty years of disappointment, to get made a County Court judge. Not that this is always so; sometimes pretension, if big enough, secures success. A man setting up as a silk-mercer in a strange town, is much likelier to succeed if he opens a huge shop, painted in flaring colours and puffed by enormous bills and vast advertising vans, than if he set up in a modest way, in something like proportion to his means. And if he succeeds, well; if he fails, his creditors bear the loss. A great field has been opened for the disappointment of men who start with the flourish of trumpets already mentioned, by the growing system of competitive examinations. By these, your

own opinion of yourself, and the home opinion of you, are brought to a severe test. I think with sympathy of the disappointment of poor lads who hang on week after week, hoping to hear that they have succeeded in gaining the coveted appointment, and then learn that they have failed. I think with sympathy of their poor parents. Even when the prize lost is not substantial pudding, but only airy praise, it is a bitter thing to lose it, after running the winner close. It must be a supremely irritating and mortifying thing to be second wrangler. Look at the rows of young fellows, sitting with their papers before them at a Civil Service Examination, and think what interest and what hopes are centred on every one of them. Think how many count on great success, kept up to do so by the estimation in which they are held at home. Their sisters and their mothers think them equal to anything. Sometimes justly; sometimes the fact justifies the anticipation. When Baron Alderson went to Cambridge, he tells us that he would have spurned the offer of being second man of his year; and sure enough, he was out of sight the first. But for one man of whom the home estimation is no more than just, there are ten thousand in whose case, to strangers, it appears simply preposterous.

There is one sense in which all after-life may be said to be a disappointment. It is far different from that which it was pictured by early anticipations and hopes. The very greatest material success still leaves the case thus. And no doubt it seems strange to many to look back on the fancies of youth, which experience has sobered down. When you go back, my reader, to the village where you were brought up, don't you remember

how you used to fancy that when you were a man you would come to it in your carriage and four? This, it is unnecessary to add, you have not yet done. You thought likewise that when you came back you would be arrayed in a scarlet coat, possibly in a cuirass of steel; whereas in fact you have come to the little inn where nobody knows you to spend the night, and you **are** wandering along the bank of the river (how little changed!) in a shooting-jacket of shepherd's plaid. You intended to marry the village grocer's pretty daughter; and for that intention probably you were somewhat hastily dismissed to a school a hundred miles off; but this evening as you passed the shop you discovered her, a plump matron, calling to her children in a voice rather shrill than sweet; and you discovered from the altered sign above the door that her father is dead, and that she has married the shopman, your hated rival of former years. And yet how happily the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb! You are not the least mortified. You are much amused that your youthful fancies have been blighted. It would have been fearful to have married that excellent individual; the shooting-jacket is greatly more comfortable than the coat of mail; and as for the carriage and four, why, even if you could afford them, you would seldom choose to drive four horses. And it is so with the more substantial anticipations of maturer years. The man who, as already mentioned, intended to be a Chief Justice, is quite happy when he is made a County Court judge. The man who intended to eclipse Mr. Dickens in the arts of popular authorship is content and proud to be the great writer of the *London Journal*. The clergyman who would have liked a grand cathedral like York Minster is perfectly pleased with his little

country church, ivy-green and grey. We come, if we are sensible folk, to be content with what we can get, though we have not what we could wish.

Still, there are certain cases in which this can hardly be so. A man of sense can bear cheerfully the frustration of the romantic fancies of childhood and youth; but not many are so philosophical in regard to the comparatively reasonable anticipations of more reasonable years. When you got married at five-and-forty, your hopes were not extravagant. You knew quite well you were not winning the loveliest of her sex, and indeed you felt you had no right to expect to do so. You were well aware that in wisdom, knowledge, accomplishment, amiability, you could not reasonably look for more than the average of the race. But you thought you might reasonably look for *that*: and now, alas, alas! you find you have not got it. How have I pitied a worthy and sensible man, listening to his wife making a fool of herself before a large company of people! How have I pitied such a one, when I heard his wife talking the most idiotical nonsense; or when I saw her flirting scandalously with a notorious scapegrace; or learned of the large parties which she gave in his absence, to the discredit of her own character and the squandering of his hard earned gains! No habit, no philosophy, will ever reconcile a human being of right feeling to such a disappointment as *that*. And even a sadder thing than this — one of the saddest things in life — is when a man begins to feel that his whole life is a failure; not merely a failure as compared with the vain fancies of youth, but a failure as compared with his sobered convictions of what he ought to have been and what he might have been. Probably, in a desponding mood, we have all

known the feeling; and even when we half knew it was morbid and transient, it was a very painful one. But painful it must be beyond all names of pain, where it is the abiding, calm, sorrowful conviction of the man's whole being. Sore must be the heart of the man of middle age, who often thinks that he is thankful his father is in his grave, and so beyond mourning over his son's sad loss in life. And even when the stinging sense of guilt is absent, it is a mournful thing for one to feel that he has, so to speak, missed stays in his earthly voyage, and run upon a mud-bank which he can never get off: to feel one's self ingloriously and uselessly stranded, while those who started with us pass by with gay flag and swelling sail. And all this may be while it is hard to know where to attach blame; it may be when there was nothing worse to complain of than a want of promptitude, resolution, and tact, at the one testing time. Every one knows the passage in point in Shakspeare.

Disappointment, I have said, is almost sure to be experienced in a greater or less degree, so long as anything remains to be wished or sought. And a provision is made for the indefinite continuance of disappointment in the lot of even the most successful of men, by the fact *in rerum naturâ* that whenever the wants felt on a lower level are supplied, you advance to a higher platform, where a new crop of wants is felt. Till the lower wants are supplied you never feel the higher; and accordingly people who pass through life barely succeeding in gaining the supply of the lower wants, will hardly be got to believe that the higher wants are ever really felt at all. A man who is labouring anxiously to earn

food and shelter for his children — who has no farther worldly end, and who thinks he would be perfectly happy if he could only be assured on New Year's day that he would never fail in earning these until the thirty-first of December, will hardly believe you when you tell him that the Marquis at the castle is now utterly miserable because the King would not give him a couple of yards of blue or green ribbon. And it is curious in how many cases worldly-successful men mount, step after step, into a new series of wants, implying a new set of mortifications and disappointments. A person begins as a small tradesman; all he aims at is a maintenance for him and his. That is his first aim. Say he succeeds in reaching it. A little ago he thought he would have been quite content could he only do *that*. But from his new level he sees afar a new peak to climb; now he aims at a fortune. That is his next aim. Say he reaches it. Now he buys an estate; now he aims at being received and admitted as a country gentleman; and the remainder of his life is given to striving for social recognition in the county. How he schemes to get the baronet to dine with him, and the baronet's lady to call upon his homely spouse! And every one has remarked with amusement the hive of petty mortifications, failures, and disappointments, through which he fights his way, till, as it may chance, he actually gains a dubious footing in the society he seeks, or gives up the endeavour as a final failure. Who shall say that any one of the successive wants the man has felt is more fanciful, less real, than any other? To Mr. Oddbody, living in his fine house, it is just as serious an aim to get asked to the Duke's ball, as in former days it was to Jack Oddbody to carry home on Satur

day night the shillings which were to buy his bread and cheese.

And another shade of disappointment which keeps pace with all material success is that which arises, not from failing to get a thing, but from getting it and then discovering that it is not what we had fancied — that it will not make us happy. Is not this disappointment felt everywhere? When the writer was a little boy, he was promised that on a certain birthday a donkey should be bought for his future riding. Did not he frequently allude to it in conversation with his companions? Did not he plague the servants for information as to the natural history and moral idiosyncrasy of donkeys? Did not the long-eared visage appear sometimes through his dreams? Ah, the donkey came! Then followed the days of being pitched over his head; the occasions on which the brute of impervious hide rushed through hedges and left me sticking in them: happiness was no nearer, though the donkey was there. Have you not, my philosophic friend, had your donkey? I mean your moral donkey. Yes, and scores of such. When you were a schoolboy, longing for the holidays, have you not chalked upon doors the legend — OH FOR AUGUST! Vague, delightful visions of perfect happiness were wrapped up in the words. But the holidays came, as all holidays have done and will do; and in a few days you were heartily wearied of them. When you were spoony about Marjory Anne, you thought that once your donkey came, once you were fairly married and settled, what a fine thing it would be! I do not say a syllable against that youthful matron; but I presume you have discovered that she falls short of perfection, and that wedded life has its many cares. You thought you would

enjoy so much the setting-up of your carriage; your wife and you often enjoyed it by anticipation on dusty summer days: but though all very well, wood and iron and leather never made the vehicle that shall realize your anticipations. The horses were often lame; the springs would sometimes break; the paint was always getting scratched and the lining cut. Oh, what a nuisance is a carriage! You fancied you would be perfectly happy when you retired from business and settled in the country. What a comment upon such fancies is the fashion in which retired men of business haunt the places of their former toils like unquiet ghosts! How sick they get of the country! I do not think of grand disappointments of the sort; of the satiety of Vathek, turning sickly away from his earthly paradise at Cintra; nor of the graceful towers I have seen rising from a woody cliff above a summer sea, and of the story told me of their builder, who, after rearing them, lost interest in them, and in sad disappointment left them to others, and went back to the busy town wherein he had made his wealth. I think of men, more than one or two, who rented their acre of land by the sea-side, and built their pretty cottage, made their grassplots and trained their roses, and then in unaccustomed idleness grew weary of the whole and sold their place to some keen bargain-maker for a tithe of what it cost them.

Why is it that failure in attaining ambitious ends is so painful? When one has honestly done one's best, and is beaten after all, conscience must be satisfied: the wound is solely to self-love; and is it not to the discredit of our nature that *that* should imply such a weary, blank, bitter feeling as it often does? Is it that every man has within his heart a lurking belief that, notwithstanding

the world's ignorance of the fact, there never was in the world anybody so remarkable as himself? I think that many mortals need daily to be putting down a vague feeling which really comes to that. You who have had experience of many men, know that you can hardly over-estimate the extent and depth of human vanity. Never be afraid but that nine men out of ten will swallow with avidity flattery, however gross; especially if it ascribe to them those qualities of which they are most manifestly deficient.

A disappointed man looks with great interest at the man who has obtained what he himself wanted. Your mother, reader, says that her ambition for you would be entirely gratified if you could but reach a certain place which some one you know has held for twenty years. You look at him with much curiosity; he appears very much like yourself; and, curiously, he does not appear particularly happy. Oh, reader, whatever you do — though last week he gained without an effort what you have been wishing for all your life — do not hate him. Resolve that you will love and wish well to the man who fairly succeeded where you fairly failed. Go to him and get acquainted with him: if you and he are both true men, you will not find it a difficult task to like him. It is perhaps asking too much of human nature to ask you to do all this in the case of the man who has carried off the woman you loved; but as regards anything else, do it all. Go to your successful rival, heartily congratulate him. Don't be jesuitical; don't merely *felicitate* the man; put down the rising feeling of envy: *that* is always out-and-out wrong. Don't give it a moment's quarter. You clerks in an office, ready to be angry with a fellow-clerk who gets the chance of a trip to Scotland on

business, don't give in to the feeling. Shake hands with him all round, and go in a body with him to Euston Square, and give him three cheers as he departs by the night mail. And you, greater mortals — you, rector of a beautiful parish, who think you would have done for a bishop as well as the clergyman next you who has got the mitre; you, clever barrister, sure some day to be solicitor-general, though sore to-day because a man next door has got that coveted post before you; go and see the successful man — go forthwith, congratulate him heartily, say frankly you wish it had been you: it will do great good both to him and to yourself. Let it not be that envy — that bitter and fast-growing fiend — shall be suffered in your heart for one minute. When I was at college I sat on the same bench with a certain man. We were about the same age. Now, I am a country parson, and he is a cabinet minister. Oh, how he has distanced poor me in the race of life! Well, he had a tremendous start, no doubt. Now, shall I hate him? Shall I pitch into him, rake up all his errors of youth, tell how stupid he was (though indeed he was not stupid), and bitterly gloat over the occasion on which he fell on the ice and tore his inexpressibles in the presence of a grinning throng? No, my old fellow-student, who hast now doubtless forgotten my name, though I so well remember yours, though you got your honours possibly in some measure from the accident of your birth, you have nobly justified their being given you so early; and so I look on with interest to your loftier advancement yet, and I say — God bless you!

I think, if I were an examiner at one of the Universities, that I should be an extremely popular one. No

man should ever be plucked. Of course it would be very wrong, and, happily, the work is in the hands of those who are much fitter for it ; but, instead of thinking solely and severely of a man's fitness to pass, I could not help thinking a great deal of the heartbreak it would be to the poor fellow and his family if he were turned. It would be ruin to any magazine to have me for its editor. I should always be printing all sorts of rubbishing articles, which are at present consigned to the Balaam-box. I could not bear to grieve and disappoint the young lady who sends her gushing verses. I should be picturing to myself the long hours of toil that resulted in the clever lad's absurd attempt at a review, and all his fluttering hopes and fears as to whether it was to be accepted or not. No doubt it is by this mistaken kindness that institutions are damaged and ruined. The weakness of a sympathetic bishop burdens the Church with a clergyman who for many years will be an injury to her ; and it would have been far better even for the poor fellow himself to have been decidedly and early kept out of a vocation for which he is wholly unfit. I am far from saying that the resolute examiner who plucks freely, and the resolute editor who rejects firmly, are deficient in kindness of heart, or even in vividness of imagination to picture what they are doing : though much of the suffering and disappointment of this world is caused by men who are almost unaware of what they do. Like the brothers of *Isabella*, in Keats' beautiful poem,

Half ignorant, they turn an easy wheel,
That sets sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

Yet though principle and moral decision may be in you sufficient to prevent your weakly yielding to the

feeling, be sure you always sympathize with failure;—honest, laborious failure. And I think all but very malicious persons generally do sympathize with it. It is easier to sympathize with failure than with success. No trace of envy comes in to mar your sympathy, and you have a pleasant sense that you are looking down from a loftier elevation. The average man likes to have some one to look down upon—even to look down upon kindly. I remember being greatly touched by hearing of a young man of much promise, who went to preach his first sermon in a little church by the sea-shore in a lonely highland glen. He preached his sermon, and got on pretty fairly; but after service he went down to the shore of the far-sounding sea, and wept to think how sadly he had fallen short of his ideal, how poor was his appearance compared to what he had intended and hoped. Perhaps a foolish vanity and self-conceit was at the foundation of his disappointment; but though I did not know him at all, I could not but have a very kindly sympathy for him. I heard, years afterwards, with great pleasure, that he had attained to no small eminence and success as a pulpit orator; and I should not have alluded to him here but for the fact that in early youth, and amid greater expectations of him, he passed away from this life of high aims and poor fulfilments. I think how poor Keats, no doubt morbidly ambitious as well as morbidly sensitive, declared in his preface to *Endymion* that ‘there is no fiercer hell than failure in a great attempt.’

Most thoughtful men must feel it a curious and interesting study, to trace the history of the closing days of those persons who have calmly and deliberately, in no sudden heat of passion, taken away their own life. In such cases, of course, we see the sense of failure, abso-

lute and complete. They have quietly resolved to give up life as a losing game. You remember the poor man who, having spent his last shilling, retired to a wood far from human dwellings, and there died voluntarily by starvation. He kept a diary of those days of gradual death, setting out his feelings both of body and mind. No nourishment passed his lips after he had chosen his last resting-place, save a little water, which he dragged himself to a pond to drink. He was not discovered till he was dead; but his melancholy chronicle appeared to have been carried down to very near the time when he became unconscious. I remember its great characteristic appeared to be a sense of utter failure. There seemed to be no passion, none of the bitter desperate resolution which prompts the energetic 'Anywhere, anywhere, out of the world;' but merely a weary, lonely wish to creep quietly away. I have no look but one of sorrow and pity to cast on the poor suicide's grave. I think the common English verdict is right as well as charitable, which supposes that in every such case reason has become unhinged, and responsibility is gone. And what desperate misery, what a black horrible anguish of heart, whether expressing itself calmly or feverishly, must have laid its gripe upon a human being before it can overcome in him the natural clinging to life, and make him deliberately turn his back upon 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day.' No doubt it is the saddest of all sad ends; but I do not forget that a certain Authority, the highest of all authorities, said to all human beings, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' The writer has, in the course of his duty, looked upon more than one suicide's dead face; and the lines of Hood appeared to sketch the fit feeling with which to do —

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour;
And leaving, with meekness,
Her soul to her Saviour.

What I have just written recalls to me, by some link of association, the words I once heard a simple old Scotch-woman utter by her son's deathbed. He was a young man of twenty-two, a pious and good young man, and I had seen him very often throughout his gradual decline. Calling one morning, I found he was gone, and his mother begged me to come and see his face once more; and standing for the last time by him, I said (and I could say them honestly) some words of Christian comfort to the poor old woman. I told her, in words far better than any of my own, how the Best Friend of mankind had said, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die.' I remember well her answer. 'Aye,' said she, 'he gaed away trusting in *that*; and he'll be sorely disappointed if he doesna' find it so.' Let me venture to express my hope, that when my readers and I pass within the veil, we may run the risk of no other disappointment than that these words should prove false; and *then* it will be well with us. There will be no disappointment *there*, in the sense of things failing to come up to our expectations.

Let it be added, that there *are* disappointments with which even the kindest hearts will have no sympathy, and failures over which we may without malignity rejoice. You do not feel very deeply for the disappointed burglar, who retires from your dwelling at 3 A. M., leaving a piece of the calf of his leg in the jaws of your

trusty watch-dog ; nor for the Irish bog-trotter who (poor fellow), from behind the hedge, misses his aim at the landlord who fed him and his family through the season of famine. You do not feel very deeply for the disappointment of the friend, possibly the slight acquaintance, who with elongated face retires from your study, having failed to persuade you to attach your signature to a bill for some hundreds of pounds 'just as a matter of form.' Very likely he wants the money ; so did the burglar : but is that any reason why *you* should give it to him ? Refer him to the wealthy and influential relatives of whom he has frequently talked to you ; tell him they are the very people to assist him in such a case with their valuable autograph. As for yourself, tell him you know what you owe to your children and yourself ; and say that the slightest recurrence to such a subject must be the conclusion of all intercourse between you. Ah, poor disappointed fellow ! How heartless it is in you to refuse to pay, out of your hard earnings, the money which he so jauntily and freely spent !

How should disappointment be met ? Well, *that* is far too large a question to be taken up at this stage of my essay, though there are various suggestions which I should like to make. Some disappointed men take to gardening and farming ; and capital things they are. But when disappointment is extreme, it will paralyse you so that you will suffer the weeds to grow up all about you, without your having the heart to set your mind to the work of having the place made neat. The state of a man's garden is a very delicate and sensitive test as to whether he is keeping hopeful and well-to-do. It is to me a very sad sight to see a parsonage getting a

dilapidated look, and the gravel walks in its garden growing weedy. The parson must be growing old and poor. The parishioners tell you how trim and orderly everything was when he came first to the parish. But his affairs have become embarrassed, or his wife and children are dead; and though still doing his duty well and faithfully, he has lost heart and interest in these little matters; and so things are as you see.

I have been amused by the way in which some people meet disappointment. They think it a great piece of worldly wisdom to deny that they have ever been disappointed at all. Perhaps it might be so, if the pretext were less transparent than it is. An old lady's son is plucked at an examination for a civil appointment. She takes up the ground that it is rather a credit to be plucked; that nearly everybody is plucked; that all the cleverest fellows are plucked; and that only stupid fellows are allowed to pass. When the examiners find a clever man, they take a pleasure in plucking him. A number of the cleverest men in England can easily put out a lad of one-and-twenty. Then, shifting her ground, she declares the examination was ridiculously easy: her son was rejected because he could not tell what two and two amount to: because he did not know the name of the river on which London is built: because he did not (in his confusion) know his own name. She shows you the indignant letter which the young man wrote to her, announcing the scandalous injustice with which he was treated. You remark three words misspelt in the first five lines; and you fancy you have fathomed the secret of the plucking.

I have sometimes tried, but in vain, to discover the

law which regulates the attainment of extreme popularity. Extreme popularity, in this country and age, appears a very arbitrary thing. I defy any person to predict *a priori* what book, or song, or play, or picture, is to become the rage,—to utterly transcend all competition. I believe, indeed, that there cannot be popularity for even a short time, without some kind or degree of merit to deserve it; and in any case there is no other standard to which one can appeal than the deliberate judgment of the mass of educated persons. If you are quite convinced that a thing is bad which all such think good, why, of course you are wrong. If you honestly think Shakespeare a fool, you are aware you must be mistaken. And so, if a book, or a picture, or a play, or a song, be really good, and if it be properly brought before the public notice, you may, as a general rule, predict that it will attain a certain measure of success. But the inexplicable thing—the thing of which I am quite unable to trace the law—is *extreme* success. How is it that one thing shoots ahead of everything else of the same class; and without being materially better, or even materially different, leaves everything else out of sight behind? Why is it that Eclipse is first and the rest nowhere, while the legs and wind of Eclipse are no whit better than the legs and wind of all the rest? If twenty novels of nearly equal merit are published, it is not impossible that one shall dart ahead of the remaining nineteen; that it shall be found in every library; that Mr. Mudie may announce that he has 3250 copies of it; that it shall be the talk of every circle; its incidents set to music, its plot dramatized; that it shall count readers by thousands while others count readers by scores; while yet one cannot really see why any of the others might not have taken its place.

Or of a score of coarse comic songs, nineteen shall never get beyond the walls of the Cyder Cellars (I understand there is a place of the name), while the twentieth, no wise superior in any respect, comes to be sung about the streets, known by everybody, turned into polkas and quadrilles and in fact to become for the time ore of the institutions of this great and intelligent country. I remember how, a year or two since, that contemptible *Rat-catcher's Daughter*, without a thing to recommend it, with no music, no wit, no sentiment, nothing but vulgar brutality, might be heard in every separate town of England and Scotland, sung about the streets by every ragged urchin; while the other songs of the vivacious Cowell fell dead from his lips. The will of the sovereign people has decided that so it shall be. And as likings and dislikings in most cases are things strongly felt, but impossible to account for even by the person who feels them, so is it with the enormous admiration, regard, and success which fall to the lot of many to whom popularity is success. Actors, statesmen, authors, preachers, have often in England their day of quite undeserved popular ovation; and by and bye their day of entire neglect. It is the rocket and the stick. We are told that Bishop Butler, about the period of the great excesses of the French Revolution, was walking in his garden with his chaplain. After a long fit of musing, the Bishop turned to the chaplain, and asked the question whether nations might not go mad, as well as individuals? Classes of society, I think, may certainly have attacks of temporary insanity on some one point. The Jenny Lind fever was such an attack. Such was the popularity of the boy-actor Betty. Such the popularity of the Small Coal Man some time in the last century; such that of the hip-

popotamus at the Regent's Park; such that of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

But this essay must have an end. It is far too long already. I am tired of it, and *a fortiori* my reader must be so. Let me try the effect of an abrupt conclusion.



CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS;

WITH SOME THOUGHTS UPON THE SWING OF THE
PENDULUM.*

I HAVE eaten up all the grounds of my tea, said, many years since, in my hearing, in modest yet triumphant tones, a little girl of seven years old. I have but to close my eyes, and I see all that scene again, almost as plainly as ever. Six or seven children (I am one of them) are sitting round a tea-table; their father and mother are there too; and an old gentleman, who is (in his own judgment) one of the wisest of men. I see the dining-room, large and low-ceilinged; the cheerful glow of the autumnal fire; the little faces in the soft candle-light, for glaring gas was there unknown. There had been much talk about the sinfulness of waste — of the waste of even very little things. The old gentleman, so wise (in his own judgment, and indeed in my judgment at that period),

* For the suggestion of the subject of this essay, and for many valuable hints as to its treatment, I am indebted to the kindness of the Archbishop of Dublin. Indeed, in all that part of the essay which treats of *Secondary Vulgar Errors*, I have done little more than expand and illustrate the skeleton of thought supplied to me by Archbishop Whately.

was instilling into the children's minds some of those lessons which are often impressed upon children by people (I am now aware) of no great wisdom or cleverness. He had dwelt at considerable length upon the sinfulness of wasting anything; likewise on the sinfulness of children being saucy or particular as to what they should eat. He enforced, with no small solemnity, the duty of children's eating what was set before them without minding whether it was good or not, or at least without minding whether they liked it or not. The poor little girl listened to all that was said, and of course received it all as indubitably true. Waste and sauciness, she saw, were wrong, so she judged that the very opposite of waste and sauciness must be right. Accordingly, she thought she would turn to use something that was very small, but still something that ought not to be wasted. Accordingly, she thought she would show the docility of her taste by eating up something that was very disagreeable. Here was an opportunity at once of acting out the great principles to which she had been listening. And while a boy, evidently destined to be a metaphysician, and evidently possessed of the spirit of resistance to constituted authority whether in government or doctrine, boldly argued that it could not be wicked in him to hate onions, because God had made him so that he did hate onions, and (going still deeper into things) insisted that to eat a thing when you did not want it was wasting it much more truly than it would be wasting it to leave it; the little girl ate up all the grounds left in her teacup, and then announced the fact with considerable complacency.

Very, very natural. The little girl's act was a slight straw showing how a great current sets. It was a fair exemplification of a tendency which is woven into the

make of our being. Tell the average mortal that it is wrong to walk on the left side of the road, and in nine cases out of ten he will conclude that the proper thing must be to walk on the right side of the road; whereas in actual life, and in almost all opinions, moral, political, and religious, the proper thing is to walk neither on the left nor the right side, but somewhere about the middle. Say to the ship-master, You are to sail through a perilous strait; you will have the raging Seylla on one hand as you go. His natural reply will be, Well, I will keep as far away from it as possible; I will keep close by the other side. But the rejoinder must be, No, you will be quite as ill off *there*; you will be in equal peril on the other side: *there* is Charybdis. What you have to do is to keep at a safe distance from each. In avoiding the one, do not run into the other.

It seems to be a great law of the universe, that Wrong lies upon either side of the way, and that Right is the narrow path between. There are the two ways of doing wrong — Too Much and Too Little. Go to the extreme right hand, and you are wrong; go to the extreme left hand, and you are wrong too. That you may be right, you have to keep somewhere between these two extremes: but not necessarily in the exact middle. All this, of course, is part of the great fact that in this world Evil has the advantage of Good. It is easier to go wrong than right.

It is very natural to think that if one thing or course be wrong, its reverse must be right. If it be wrong to walk towards the east, surely it must be right to walk towards the west. If it be wrong to dress in black, it must be right to dress in white. It is somewhat hard to say, *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt* — to declare, as if *that* were a statement of the whole truth,

that *fools mistake reverse of wrong for right*. Fools do so indeed, but not fools only. The average human being, with the most honest intentions, is prone to mistake reverse of wrong for right. We are fond, by our natural constitution, of broad distinctions — of classifications that put the whole interests and objects of this world to the right-hand and to the left. We long for Aye or No — for Heads or Tails. We are impatient of limitations, qualifications, restrictions. You remember how Mr. Micawber explained the philosophy of income and expenditure, and urged people never to run in debt. *Income*, said he, *a hundred pounds a year; expenditure ninety-nine pounds nineteen shillings: Happiness. Income, a hundred pounds a year; expenditure a hundred pounds and one shilling: Misery*. You see the principle involved is, that if you are not happy, you must be miserable — that if you are not miserable, you must be happy. If you are not any particular thing, then you are its opposite. If you are not For, then you are Against. If you are not black, many men will jump to the conclusion that you are white: the fact probably being that you are gray. If not a Whig, you must be a Tory: in truth, you are a Liberal-Conservative. We desiderate in all things the sharp decidedness of the verdict of a jury — Guilty or Not Guilty. We like to conclude that if a man be not very good, then he is very bad; if not very clever, then very stupid; if not very wise, then a fool: whereas in fact, the man probably is a curious mixture of good and evil, strength and weakness, wisdom and folly, knowledge and ignorance, cleverness and stupidity.

Let it be here remarked, that in speaking of it as an error to take *reverse of wrong for right*, I use the words in their ordinary sense, as generally understood. In

common language the *reverse* of a thing is taken to mean the thing at *the opposite end of the scale from it*. Thus, black is the reverse of white, bigotry of latitudinarianism, malevolence of benevolence, parsimony of extravagance, and the like. Of course, in strictness, these things are not the *reverse* of one another. In strictness, the reverse of wrong always is right; for, to speak with severe precision, the reverse of *steering upon Scylla* is simply *not steering upon Scylla*; the reverse of *being extravagant* is not *being parsimonious* — it is simply *not being extravagant*; the reverse of *walking eastward* is not *walking westward* — it is simply *not walking eastward*. And *that* may include standing still, or walking to any point of the compass except the east. But I understand the *reverse of a thing* as meaning the *opposite extreme* from it. And you see, the Latin words quoted above are more precise than the English. It is severely true, that *while fools think to shun error on one side, they run into the contrary error* — *i. e.*, the error that lies equidistant, or nearly equidistant, on the other side of the line of right.

One class of the errors into which men are prone to run under this natural impulse are those which have been termed *Secondary Vulgar Errors*. A *vulgar error*, you will understand, my reader, does not by any means signify an error into which only the vulgar are likely to fall. It does not by any means signify a mistaken belief which will be taken up only by inferior and uneducated minds. A *vulgar error* means an error either in conduct or belief into which *man*, by the make of his being, is likely to fall. Now, people a degree wiser and more thoughtful than the mass, discover that these vulgar errors are errors. They conclude that their opposites (*i. e.*,

the things at the other extremity of the scale) must be right; and by running into the opposite extreme they run just as far wrong upon the other side. There is too great a reaction. The twig was bent to the right — they bend it to the left, forgetting that the right thing was that the twig should be straight. If convinced that waste and sauciness are wrong, they proceed to eat the grounds of their tea; if convinced that self-indulgence is wrong, they conclude that hair-shirts and midnight floggings are right; if convinced that the Church of Rome has too many ceremonies, they resolve that they will have no ceremonies at all; if convinced that it is unworthy to grovel in the presence of a duke, they conclude that it will be a fine thing to refuse the duke ordinary civility; if convinced that monarchs are not much wiser or better than other human beings, they run off into the belief that all kings have been little more than incarnate demons; if convinced that representative government often works very imperfectly, they raise a cry for imperialism; if convinced that monarchy has its abuses, they call out for republicanism; if convinced that Britain has many things which are not so good as they ought to be, they keep constantly extolling the perfection of the United States.

Now, inasmuch as a rise of even one step in the scale of thought elevates the man who has taken it above the vast host of men who have never taken even that one step, the number of people who (at least in matters of any moment) arrive at the Secondary Vulgar Error is much less than the number of the people who stop at the Primary Vulgar Error. Very great multitudes of human beings think it a very fine thing, the very finest of all human things, to be very rich. A much smaller

number, either from the exercise of their own reflective powers, or from the indoctrination of romantic novels and overdrawn religious books, run to the opposite extreme : undervalue wealth, deny that it adds anything to human comfort and enjoyment, declare that it is an unmixed evil, profess to despise it. I dare say that many readers of the *Idylls of the King* will so misunderstand that exquisite song of ‘ Fortune and her Wheel,’ as to see in it only the charming and sublime embodiment of a secondary vulgar error, — the error, to wit, that wealth and outward circumstances are of no consequence at all. To me that song appears rather to take the further step, and to reach the conclusion in which is embodied the deliberate wisdom of humankind upon this matter : the conclusion which shakes from itself on either hand either vulgar error : the idolization of wealth on the one side, the contempt of it on the other : and to convey the sobered judgment that while the advantages and refinements of fortune are so great that no thoughtful man can long despise it, the responsibilities and temptations of it are so great that no thoughtful man will much repine if he fail to reach it ; and thus that we may genially acquiesce in that which it pleases God to send. Midway between two vulgar errors : steering a sure track between Scylla and Charybdis : the grovelling multitude to the left, the romantic few to the right ; stand the words of inspired wisdom. The pendulum had probably oscillated many times between the two errors, before it settled at the central truth ; ‘ Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : Lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.’

But although these errors of reaction are less common

than the primary vulgar errors, they are better worth noticing: inasmuch as in many cases they are the errors of the well-intentioned. People fall into the primary vulgar errors without ever thinking of right or wrong: merely feeling an impulse to go there, or to think thus. But worthy folk, for the most part, fall into the secondary vulgar errors, while honestly endeavouring to escape what they have discerned to be wrong. Not indeed that it is always in good faith that men run to the opposite extreme. Sometimes they do it in pet and perversity, being well aware that they are doing wrong. You hint to some young friend, to whom you are nearly enough related to be justified in doing so, that the dinner to which he has invited you, with several others, is unnecessarily fine, is somewhat extravagant, is beyond what he can afford. The young friend asks you back in a week or two, and sets before you a feast of salt herrings and potatoes. Now the fellow did not run into this extreme with the honest intention of doing right. He knew perfectly well that this was not what you meant. He did not go through this piece of folly in the sincere desire to avoid the other error of extravagance. Or, you are a country clergyman. You are annoyed, Sunday by Sunday, by a village lad who, from enthusiasm or ostentation, sings so loud in church as to disturb the whole congregation. You hint to him, as kindly as you can, that there is something very pleasing about the softer tones of his voice, and that you would like to hear them more frequently. But the lad sees through your civil way of putting the case. His vanity is touched. He sees you mean that you don't like to hear him bellow: and next Sunday you will observe that he shuts up his hymn-book in dudgeon, and

will not sing at all. Leave the blockhead to himself. Do not set yourself to stroke down his self-conceit: he knows quite well he is doing wrong: there is neither sense nor honesty in what he does. You remark at dinner, while staying with a silly old gentleman, that the plum-pudding, though admirable, perhaps errs on the side of over-riehness; next day he sets before you a mass of stiff paste with no plums at all, and says, with a look of sly stupidity, 'Well, I hope you are satisfied now.' Politeness prevents your replying, 'No, you don't. You know that is not what I meant. You are a fool.' You remember the boy in *Pickwick*, who on his father finding fault with him for something wrong he had done, offered to kill himself if that would be any satisfaction to his parent. In this case you have a more recondite instance of this peculiar folly. Here the primary course is tacitly assumed, without being stated. The primary impulse of the human being is to take care of himself; the opposite of *that* of course is to kill himself. And the boy, being chidden for doing something which might rank under the general head of taking care of himself, proposed (as that course appeared unsatisfactory) to take the opposite one. 'You don't take exercise enough,' said a tutor to a wrong-headed boy who was under his care: 'you ought to walk more.' Next morning the perverse fellow entered the breakfast parlour in a fagged condition, and said, with the air of a martyr, 'Well, I trust I have taken exercise enough to-day: I have walked twenty miles this morning.' As for all such manifestations of the disposition to run into opposite extremes, let them be treated as manifestations of pettiness, perversity, and dishonesty. In some cases a high-spirited youth may be excused them; but, for the most

part, they come with doggedness, wrong-headedness, and dense stupidity. And any pretext that they are exhibited with an honest intention to do right, ought to be regarded as a transparently false pretext.

I have now before me a list (prepared by a much stronger hand than mine) of honest cases in which men, avoiding Scylla, run into Charybdis: in which men, thinking to bend the crooked twig straight, bend it backwards. But before mentioning these, it may be remarked, that there is often such a thing as a reaction from a natural tendency, even when that natural tendency is not towards what may be called a primary vulgar error. The law of reaction extends to all that human beings can ever feel the disposition to think or do. There are, doubtless, minds of great fixity of opinion and motive: and there are certain things, in the case of almost all men, as regards which their belief and their active bias never vary through life: but with most human beings, with nations, with humankind, as regards very many and very important matters, as surely and as far as the pendulum has swung to the right, so surely and so far will it swing to the left. I do not say that an opinion in favour of monarchy is a primary vulgar error; or that an opinion in favour of republicanism is a secondary: both may be equally right: but assuredly each of these is a reaction from the other. America, for instance, is one great reaction from Europe. The principle on which these reactionary swings of the pendulum take place, is plain. Whatever be your present position, you feel its evils and drawbacks keenly. Your feeling of the present evil is much more vivid than your imagination of the evil which is sure to be inherent in the opposite system, whatever that may be. You live in a country where

the national Church is Presbyterian. You see, day by day, many inconveniences and disadvantages inherent in that form of church government. It is of the nature of evil to make its presence much more keenly felt than the presence of good. So while keenly alive to the drawbacks of presbytery, you are hardly conscious of its advantages. You swing over, let us suppose, to the other end: you swing over from Scotland into England, from presbytery to episcopacy. For awhile you are quite delighted to find yourself free from the little evils of which you had been wont to complain. But by and bye the drawbacks of episcopacy begin to push themselves upon your notice. You have escaped one set of disadvantages: you find that you have got into the middle of another. Scylla no longer bellows in your hearing; but Charybdis whirls you round. You begin to feel that the country and the system yet remain to be sought, in which some form of evil, of inconvenience, of worry, shall not press you. Am I wrong in fancying, dear friends more than one or two, that but for very shame the pendulum would swing back again to the point from which it started: and you, kindly Scots, would find yourselves more at home in kindly and homely Scotland, with her simple forms and faith? So far as my experience has gone, I think that in all matters not of vital moment, it is best that the pendulum should stay at the end of the swing where it first found itself: it will be in no more stable position at the other end: and it will somehow feel stranger-like there. And you, my friend, though in your visits to Anglican territory you heartily conform to the Anglican Church, and enjoy as much as mortal can her noble cathedrals and her stately worship; still I know that after all, you cannot shake off the spell in

which the old remembrances of your boyhood have bound you. I know that your heart warms to the Burning Bush;* and that it will, till death chills it.

A noteworthy fact in regard to the swing of the pendulum, is that the secondary tendency is sometimes found in the ruder state of society, and the less reflective man. Naturalness comes last. The pendulum started from naturalness: it swung over into artificiality: and with thoughtful people it has swung back to naturalness again. Thus it is natural, when in danger, to be afraid. It is natural, when you are possessed by any strong feeling, to show it. You see all this in children: this is the point which the pendulum starts from. It swings over, and we find a reaction from this. The reaction is, to maintain and exhibit perfect coolness and indifference in danger; to pretend to be incapable of fear. This state of things we find in the Red Indian, a rude and uncivilized being. But it is plain that with people who are able to think, there must be a reaction from this. The pendulum cannot long stay in a position which flies so completely in the face of the law of gravitation. It is pure nonsense to talk about being incapable of fear. I remember reading somewhere about Queen Elizabeth, that 'her soul was incapable of fear.' That statement is false and absurd. You may regard fear as unmanly and unworthy: you may repress the manifestations of it; but the state of mind which (in beings not properly monstrous or defective) follows the perception of being in danger, is fear. As surely as the perception of light is sight, so surely is the perception of danger fear. And for a man to say that his soul is incapable of fear, is just as absurd as to say that from a peculiarity of

* The scutcheon of the Church of Scotland.

constitution, when dipped in water, he does not get wet. You, human being, whoever you may be, when you are placed in danger, and know you are placed in danger, and reflect on the fact, you feel afraid. Don't vapour and say no; we know how the mental machine *must* work, unless it be diseased. Now, the thoughtful man admits all this: he admits that a bullet through his brain would be a very serious thing for himself, and likewise for his wife and children: he admits that he shrinks from such a prospect; he will take pains to protect himself from the risk; but he says that if duty requires him to run the risk he will run it. *This* is the courage of the civilized man as opposed to the blind, bull-dog insensibility of the savage. *This* is courage — to know the existence of danger, but to face it nevertheless. Here, under the influence of longer thought, the pendulum has swung into common sense, though not quite back to the point from which it started. Of course, it still keeps swinging about in individual minds. The other day I read in a newspaper a speech by a youthful rifleman, in which he boasted that no matter to what danger exposed, *his* corps would never take shelter behind trees and rocks, but would stand boldly out to the aim of the enemy. I was very glad to find this speech answered in a letter to the *Times*, written by a rifleman of great experience and proved bravery. The experienced man pointed out that the inexperienced man was talking nonsense: that true courage appeared in manfully facing risks which were inevitable, but not in running into needless peril: and that the business of a soldier was to be as useful to his country and as destructive to the enemy as possible, and not to make needless exhibitions of personal foolhardiness. Thus swings the pendulum as to

danger and fear. The point of departure, the primary impulse, is,

1. An impulse to avoid danger at all hazards: *i. e.*, to run away, and save yourself, however discredibly.

The pendulum swings to the other extremity, and we have the secondary impulse —

2. An impulse to disregard danger, and even to run into it, as if it were of no consequence at all; *i. e.*, young rifleman foolhardiness, and Red Indian insensibility.

The pendulum comes so far back, and rests at the point of wisdom:

3. A determination to avoid all danger, the running into which would do no good, and which may be avoided consistently with honour; but manfully to face danger, however great, that comes in the way of duty.

But after all this deviation from the track, I return to my list of Secondary Vulgar Errors, run into with good and honest intentions. Here is the first —

Don't you know, my reader, that it is natural to think very bitterly of the misconduct which affects yourself? If a man cheats your friend, or cheats your slight acquaintance, or cheats some one who is quite unknown to you, by selling him a lame horse, you disapprove his conduct, indeed, but not nearly so much as if he had cheated yourself. You learn that Miss Limejuice has been disseminating a grossly untrue account of some remarks which you made in her hearing: and your first impulse is to condemn her malicious falsehood much more severely than if she had merely told a few lies about some one else. Yet it is quite evident that if we were to estimate the doings of men with perfect justice, we should fix solely on the moral element in their doings; and the

accidental circumstance of the offence or injury to ourselves would be neither here nor there. The primary vulgar error, then, in this case is, undue and excessive disapprobation of misconduct from which *we* have suffered. No one but a very stupid person would, if it were fairly put to him, maintain that this extreme disapprobation was right: but it cannot be denied that this is the direction to which *all* human beings are likely, at first, to feel an impulse to go. A man does you some injury: you are much angrier than if he had done the like injury to some one else. You are much angrier when your own servants are guilty of little neglects and follies, than when the servants of your next neighbour are guilty in a precisely similar degree. The Prime Minister (or Chancellor) fails to make you a Queen's Counsel or a Judge: you are much more angry than if he had overlooked some other man, of precisely equal merit. And I do not mean merely that the injury done to yourself comes more home to you, but that positively you think it a worse thing. It seems as if there were more of moral evil in it. The boy who steals your plums seems worse than other boys stealing other plums. The servant who sells your oats and starves your horses, seems worse than other servants who do the like. It is not merely that you feel where the shoe pinches yourself, more than where it pinches another: *that* is all quite right. It is that you have a tendency to think it is a worse shoe than another which gives an exactly equal amount of pain. You are prone to dwell upon and brood over the misconduct which affected yourself.

Well, you begin to see that this is unworthy, that selfishness and mortified conceit are at the foundation of it. You determine that you will shake yourself free from

this vulgar error. What more magnanimous, you think, than to do the opposite of the wrong thing? Surely it will be generous, and even heroic, to wholly acquit the wrong-doer, and even to cherish him for a bosom friend. So the pendulum swings over to the opposite extreme, and you land in the secondary vulgar error. I do not mean to say that in practice many persons are likely to thus bend the twig backwards; but it is no small evil to think that it would be a right thing, and a fine thing, to do even that which you never intend to do. So you write an essay, or even a book, the gist of which is that it is a grand thing to select for a friend and guide the human being who has done you signal injustice and harm. Over that book, if it be a prettily written tale, many young ladies will weep: and though without the faintest intention of imitating your hero's behaviour, they will think that it would be a fine thing if they did so. And it is a great mischief to pervert the moral judgment and falsely to excite the moral feelings. You forget that wrong is wrong, though it be done against yourself, and that you have no right to acquit the wrong to yourself as though it were no wrong at all. *That* lies beyond your province. You may forgive the personal offence, but it does not rest with you to acquit the guilt. You have no right to confuse moral distinctions by practically saying that wrong is not wrong, because it is done against you. All wrong is against very many things and very grave things, besides being against you. It is not for you to speak in the name of God and the universe. You may not wish to say much about the injury done to yourself, but *there it is*; and as to the choosing for your friend the man who has greatly injured you, in most cases such a choice would be a very unwise one,

because in most cases it would amount to this — that you should select a man for a certain post mainly because he has shown himself possessed of qualities which unfit him for that post. *That* surely would be very foolish. If you had to appoint a postman, would you choose a man because he had no legs? And what is very foolish **can** never be very magnanimous.

The right course to follow lies between the two which have been set out. The man who has done wrong to you is still a *wrong-doer*. The question you have to consider is, What ought your conduct to be towards a wrong-doer? Let there be no harbour given to any feeling of personal revenge. But remember that it is your duty to disapprove what is wrong, and that it is wisdom not too far to trust a man who has proved himself unworthy to be trusted. I have no feeling of selfish bitterness against the person who deceived me deliberately and grossly, yet I cannot but judge that deliberate and gross deceit is bad; and I cannot but judge that the person who deceived me once might, if tempted, deceive me again: so he shall not have the opportunity. I look at the horse which a friend offers me for a short ride. I discern upon the knees of the animal a certain slight but unmistakeable roughness of the hair. That horse has been down; and if I mount that horse at all (which I shall not do except in a case of necessity), I shall ride him with a tight rein, and with a sharp look-out for rolling stones.

Another matter in regard to which Scylla and Charybdis are very discernible, is the fashion in which human beings think and speak of the good or bad qualities of **beir** friends.

The primary tendency here is to blindness to the faults of a friend, and over-estimate of his virtues and qualifications. Most people are disposed extravagantly to over-value anything belonging to or connected with themselves. A farmer tells you that there never were such turnips as his turnips; a schoolboy thinks that the world cannot show boys so clever as those with whom he is competing for the first place in his class; a clever student at college tells you what magnificent fellows are certain of his compeers — how sure they are to become great men in life. Talk of Tennyson! You have not read Smith's prize poem. Talk of Macaulay! Ah, if you could see Brown's prize essay! A mother tells you (fathers are generally less infatuated) how her boy was beyond comparison the most distinguished and clever in his class — how he stood quite apart from any of the others. Your eye happens to fall a day or two afterwards upon the prize-list advertised in the newspapers, and you discover that (curiously) the most distinguished and clever boy in that particular school is rewarded with the seventh prize. I dare say you may have met with families in which there existed the most absurd and preposterous belief as to their superiority, social, intellectual and moral, above other families which were as good or better. And it is to be admitted, that if you are happy enough to have a friend whose virtues and qualifications are really high, your primary tendency will probably be to fancy him a great deal cleverer, wiser, and better than he really is, and to imagine that he possesses no faults at all. The over-estimate of his good qualities will be the result of your seeing them constantly, and having their excellences much pressed on your attention, while from not knowing so well other men who are quite as good,

you are led to think that those good qualities are more rare and excellent than in fact they are. And you may possibly regard it as a duty to shut your eyes to the faults of those who are dear to you, and to persuade yourself, against your judgment, that they have no faults or none worth thinking of. One can imagine a child painfully struggling to be blind to a parent's errors, and thinking it undutiful and wicked to admit the existence of that which is too evident. And if you know well a really good and able man, you will very naturally think his goodness and his ability to be relatively much greater than they are. For goodness and ability are in truth very noble things: the more you look at them the more you will feel this: and it is natural to judge that what is so noble cannot be very common; whereas in fact there is much more good in this world than we are ready to believe. If you find an intelligent person who believes that some particular author is by far the best in the language, or that some particular composer's music is by far the finest, or that some particular preacher is by far the most eloquent and useful, or that some particular river has by far the finest scenery, or that some particular seaside place has by far the most bracing and exhilarating air, or that some particular magazine is ten thousand miles ahead of all competitors, the simple explanation in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is this — that the honest individual who holds these overstrained opinions *knows* a great deal better than he knows any others, that author, that music, that preacher, that river, that seaside place, that magazine. He knows how good they are: and not having much studied the merits of competing things, he does not know that these are very nearly as good.

But I do not think that there is any subject whatever in regard to which it is so capricious and arbitrary whether you shall run it into Scylla or into Charybdis. It depends entirely on how it strikes the mind, whether you shall go off a thousand miles to the right or a thousand miles to the left. You know, if you fire a rifle-bullet at an iron-coated ship, the bullet, if it impinge upon the iron plate at A, may glance away to the west, while if it impinge upon the iron plate at B, only an inch distant from A, it may glance off towards the directly opposite point of the compass. A very little thing makes all the difference. You stand in the engine-room of a steamer; you admit the steam to the cylinders, and the paddles turn ahead; a touch of a lever, you admit the selfsame steam to the selfsame cylinders, and the paddles turn astern. It is so oftentimes in the moral world. The turning of a straw decides whether the engines shall work forward or backward.

Now, given a friend, to whom you are very warmly attached: it is a toss-up whether your affection for your friend shall make you,

1. Quite blind to his faults; or,
2. Acutely and painfully alive to his faults.

Sincere affection may impel either way. Your friend, for instance, makes a speech at a public dinner. He makes a tremendously bad speech. Now, your love for him may lead you either

1. To fancy that his speech is a remarkably good one; or,
2. To feel acutely how bad his speech is, and to wish you could sink through the floor for very shame.

If you did not care for him at all, you would not mind a bit whether he made a fool of himself or not. But if

you really care for him, and if the speech be really very bad, and if you are competent to judge whether speeches in general be bad or not, I do not see how you can escape falling either into Scylla or Charybdis. And accordingly, while there are families in which there exists a preposterous over-estimate of the talents and acquirements of their several members, there are other families in which the rifle-bullet has glanced off in the opposite direction, and in which there exists a depressing and unreasonable under-estimate of the talents and acquirements of their several members. I have known such a thing as a family in which certain boys during their early education had it ceaselessly drilled into them that they were the idlest, stupidest, and most ignorant boys in the world. The poor little fellows grew up under that gloomy belief: for conscience is a very artificial thing, and you may bring up very good boys in the belief that they are very bad. At length, happily, they went to a great public school; and like rockets they went up forthwith to the top of their classes, and never lost their places there. From school they went to the university, and there won honours more eminent than had ever been won before. It will not surprise people who know much of human nature, to be told that through this brilliant career of school and college work the home belief in their idleness and ignorance continued unchanged, and that hardly at its end was the toil-worn senior wrangler regarded as other than an idle and useless blockhead. Now, the affection which prompts the under-estimate may be quite as real and deep as that which prompts the over-estimate, but its manifestation is certainly the less amiable and pleasing. I have known a successful author whose relatives never believed, till the reviews assured them of

it, that his writings were anything but contemptible and discreditable trash.

I have been speaking of an honest though erroneous estimate of the qualities of one's friends, rather than of any expression of that estimate. The primary tendency is to an over-estimate; the secondary tendency is to an under-estimate. A commonplace man thinks there never was mortal so wise and good as the friend he values; a man who is a thousandth part of a degree less commonplace resolves that he will keep clear of that error, and accordingly he feels bound to exaggerate the failings of his friend and to extenuate his good qualities. He thinks that a friend's judgment is very good and sound, and that he may well rely upon it; but for fear of showing it too much regard, he probably shows it too little. He thinks that in some dispute his friend is right; but for fear of being partial he decides that his friend is wrong. It is obvious that in any instance in which a man, seeking to avoid the primary error of over-estimating his friend, falls into the secondary of under-estimating him, he will (if any importance be attached to his judgment) damage his friend's character; for most people will conclude that he is saying of his friend the best that can be said; and that if even *he* admits that there is so little to approve about his friend, there must be very little indeed to approve: whereas the truth may be, that he is saying the worst that can be said — that no man could with justice give a worse picture of the friend's character.

Not very far removed from this pair of vulgar errors stand the following :

The primary vulgar error is, to set up as an infallible

oracle one whom we regard as wise — to regard any question as settled finally if we know what is his opinion upon it. You remember the man in the *Spectator* who was always quoting the sayings of Mr. Nisby. There was a report in London that the Grand Vizier was dead. The good man was uncertain whether to believe the report or not. He went and talked with Mr. Nisby and returned with his mind reassured. Now, he enters in his diary that ‘the Grand Vizier was certainly dead.’ Considering the weakness of the reasoning powers of many people, there is something pleasing after all in this tendency to look round for somebody stronger upon whom they may lean. It is wise and natural in a scarlet-runner to climb up something, for it could not grow up by itself; and for practical purposes it is well that in each household there should be a little Pope, whose *dicta* on all topics shall be unquestionable. It saves what is to many people the painful effort of making up their mind what they are to do or to think. It enables them to think or act with much greater decision and confidence. Most men have always a lurking distrust of their own judgment, unless they find it confirmed by that of somebody else. There are very many decent commonplace people who, if they had been reading a book or article and had been thinking it very fine, would, if you were resolutely and loudly to declare in their hearing that it was wretched trash, begin to think that it was wretched trash too.

The primary vulgar error, then, is to regard as an oracle one whom we esteem as wise; and the secondary, the Charybdis opposite to this Scylla, is, to entertain an excessive dread of being too much led by one whom we esteem as wise. I mean an honest candid dread. I

do not mean a petted, wrong-headed, pragmatieal determination to let him see that you can think for yourself. You see, my friend, I don't suppose you to be a self-conceited fool. You remember how Presumption, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, on being offered some good advice, cut his kind adviser short by declaring that *Every tub must stand on its own bottom*. We have all known men young and old, who, upon being advised to do something which they knew they ought to do, would, out of pure perversity and a wrong-headed independence, go and do just the opposite thing. The secondary error of which I am now thinking is that of the man who honestly dreads making too much of the judgment of any mortal: and who, acting from a good intention, probably goes wrong in the same direction as the wrong-headed conceited man. Now, don't you know that to such an extent does this morbid fear of trusting too much to any mortal go in some men, that in their practical belief you would think that the fact of any man being very wise was a reason why his judgment should be set aside as unworthy of consideration; and more particularly, that the fact of any man being supposed to be a powerful reasoner, was quite enough to show that all he says is to go for nothing? You are quite aware how jauntily some people use this last consideration, to sweep away at once all the reasons given by an able and ingenious speaker or writer. And it cuts the ground effectually from under his feet. You state an opinion, somewhat opposed to that commonly received. An honest, stupid person meets it with a surprised stare. You tell him (I am recording what I have myself witnessed) that you have been reading a work on the subject by a certain prelate: you state as well as you can the arguments which are

set forth by the distinguished prelate. These arguments seem of great weight. They deserve at least to be carefully considered. They seem to prove the novel opinion to be just: they assuredly call on candid minds to ponder the whole matter well before relapsing into the old current way of thinking. Do you expect that the honest, stupid person will judge thus? If so, you are mistaken. He is not shaken in the least by all these strong reasons. The man who has set these reasons forth is known to be a master of logic: *that* is good ground why all his reasons should count for nothing. *Oh*, says the stupid, honest person, *we all know that the Archbishop can prove anything!* And so the whole thing is finally settled.

I have a considerable list of instances in which the reaction from an error on one side of the line of right, lands in error equally distant from the line of right on the other side: but it is needless to go on to illustrate these at length; the mere mention of them will suffice to suggest many thoughts to the intelligent reader. A primary vulgar error, to which very powerful minds have frequently shown a strong tendency, is bigoted intolerance: intolerance in politics, in religion, in ecclesiastical affairs, in morals, in anything. You may safely say that nothing but most unreasonable bigotry would lead a Tory to say that all Whigs are scoundrels, or a Whig to say that all Tories are bloated tyrants or crawling sycophants. I must confess that, in severe reason, it is impossible entirely to justify the Churchman who holds that all Dissenters are extremely bad; though (so does inveterate prepossession warp the intellect) I have also to admit that it appears to me that for a Dissenter to hold that there is little or no good in the Church is a

great deal worse. There is something fine, however, about a heartily intolerant man: you like him, though you disapprove of him. Even if I were inclined to Whiggery, I should admire the downright dictum of Dr. Johnson, that *the devil was the first Whig*. Even if I were a Nonconformist, I should like Sydney Smith the better for the singular proof of his declining strength which he once adduced: 'I do believe,' he said, 'that if you were to put a knife into my hand, I should not have vigour enough to stick it into a Dissenter!' The secondary error in this respect is a latitudinarian liberality which regards truth and falsehood as matters of indifference. Genuine liberality of sentiment is a good thing, and difficult as it is good: but much liberality, political and religious, arises really from the fact, that the liberal man does not care a rush about the matter in debate. It is very easy to be tolerant in a case in which you have no feeling whatever either way. The Churchman who does not mind a bit whether the Church stands or falls, has no difficulty in tolerating the enemies and assailants of the Church. It is different with a man who holds the existence of a national Establishment as a vital matter. And I have generally remarked that when clergymen of the Church profess extreme catholicity of spirit, and declare that they do not regard it as a thing of the least consequence whether a man be Churchman or Dissenter, intelligent Nonconformists receive such protestations with much contempt, and (possibly with injustice) suspect their utterer of hypocrisy. If you really care much about any principle; and if you regard it as of essential importance; you cannot help feeling a strong impulse to intolerance of those who decidedly and actively differ from you.

Here are some further vulgar errors, primary and secondary :

Primary — Idleness, and excessive self-indulgence ;

Secondary — Penances, and self-inflicted tortures.

Primary — *Swallowing whole* all that is said or done by one's party ;

Secondary — Dread of quite agreeing, or quite disagreeing on any point with any one ; and trying to keep at exactly an equal distance from each.

Primary — Following the fashion with indiscriminate ardour ;

Secondary — Finding a merit in singularity, as such.

Primary — Being quite captivated with thought which is striking and showy, but not sound ;

Secondary — Concluding that whatever is sparkling must be unsound.

I hardly know which tendency of the following is the primary, and which the secondary ; but I am sure that both exist. It may depend upon the district of country, and the age of the thinker, which of the two is the action and which the reaction :

1. Thinking a clergyman a model of perfection, because he is a stout dashing fellow who plays at cricket and goes out fox-hunting ; and, generally, who flies in the face of all conventionalism ;

2. Thinking a clergyman a model of perfection because he is of very grave and decorous deportment ; never plays at cricket, and never goes out fox-hunting ; and, generally, conforms carefully to all the little proprieties.

1. Thinking a bishop a model prelate because he has no stiffness or ceremony about him, but talks frankly to everybody, and puts all who approach him at their ease ;

2. Thinking a bishop a model prelate because he never descends from his dignity ; never forgets that he is a bishop, and keeps all who approach him in their proper places.

1. Thinking the Angliean Church service the best, because it is so decorous, solemn, and dignified ;

2. Thinking the Scotch Church service the best, because it is so simple and so capable of adaptation to all circumstances which may arise.

1. Thinking an artisan a sensible right-minded man, knowing his station, because he is always very respectful in his demeanour to the squire, and great folks generally ;

2. Thinking an artisan a fine, manly, independent fellow, because he is always much less respectful in his demeanour to the squire than he is to other people.

1. Thinking it a fine thing to be a fast, reckless, swaggering, drinking, swearing reprobate : Being ashamed of the imputation of being a well-behaved and (above all) a pious and conscientious young man : Thinking it manly to do wrong, and washy to do right ;

2. Thinking it a despicable thing to be a fast, reckless, swaggering, drinking, swearing reprobate : Thinking it is manly to do right, and shameful to do wrong.

1. That a young man should begin his letters to his

father with HONOURED SIR; and treat the old gentleman with extraordinary deference upon all occasions :

2. That a young man should begin his remarks to his father on any subject with, I SAY, GOVERNOR; and treat the old gentleman upon all occasions with no deference at all.

But indeed, intelligent reader, the swing of the pendulum is the type of the greater amount of human opinion and human feeling. In individuals, in communities, in parishes, in little country towns, in great nations, from hour to hour, from week to week, from century to century, the pendulum swings to and fro. From *Yes* on the one side to *No* on the other side of almost all conceivable questions, the pendulum swings. Sometimes it swings over from *Yes* to *No* in a few hours or days ; sometimes it takes centuries to pass from the one extremity to the other. In feeling, in taste, in judgment, in the grandest matters and the least, the pendulum swings. From Popery to Puritanism ; from Puritanism back towards Popery ; from Imperialism to Republicanism, and back towards Imperialism again ; from Gothic architecture to Palladian, and from Palladian back to Gothic ; from hooped petticoats to drapery of the scantiest, and from that backwards to the multitudinous erinoline ; from crying up the science of arms to crying it down, and back ; from the schoolboy telling you that his companion Brown is the jolliest fellow, to the schoolboy telling you that his companion Brown is a beast, and back again ; from very high carriages to very low ones and back ; from very short horsetails to very long ones and back again — the pendulum swings. In matters of serious judgment it is comparatively easy to discern the rationale of this oscill-

lation from side to side. It is that the evils of what is present are strongly felt, while the evils of what is absent are forgotten; and so, when the pendulum has swung over to A, the evils of A send it flying over to B, while when it reaches B the evils of B repel it again to A. In matters of feeling it is less easy to discover the how and why of the process: we can do no more than take refuge in the general belief that nature loves the swing of the pendulum. There are people who at one time have an excessive affection for some friend, and at another take a violent disgust at him: and who (though sometimes permanently remaining at the latter point) oscillate between these positive and negative poles. You, being a sensible man, would not feel very happy if some men were loudly crying you up: for you would be very sure that in a little while they would be loudly crying you down. If you should ever happen to feel for one day an extraordinary lightness and exhilaration of spirits, you will know that you must pay for all this the price of corresponding depression — the hot fit must be counterbalanced by the cold. Let us thank God that there are beliefs and sentiments as to which the pendulum does not swing, though even in these I have known it do so. I have known the young girl who appeared thoroughly good and pious, who devoted herself to works of charity, and (with even an over-scrupulous spirit) eschewed vain company: and who by and bye learned to laugh at all serious things, and ran into the utmost extremes of giddiness and extravagant gaiety. And not merely should all of us be thankful if we feel that in regard to the gravest sentiments and beliefs our mind and heart remain year after year at the same fixed point: I think we should be thankful if we find that as regards

our favourite books and authors our taste remains unchanged ; that the calm judgment of our middle age approves the preferences of ten years since, and that these gather strength as time gives them the witchery of old remembrances and associations. You enthusiastically admired Byron once, you estimate him very differently now. You once thought *Festus* finer than *Paradise Lost*, but you have swung away from *that*. But for a good many years you have held by Wordsworth, Shakspeare, and Tennyson, and this taste you are not likely to out-grow. It is very curious to look over a volume which we once thought magnificent, enthralling, incomparable, and to wonder how on earth we ever cared for that stilted rubbish. No doubt the pendulum swings quite as decidedly to your estimate of yourself as to your estimate of any one else. It would be nothing at all to have other people attacking and depreciating your writings, sermons, and the like, if you yourself had entire confidence in them. The mortifying thing is when your own taste and judgment say worse of your former productions than could be said by the most unfriendly critic ; and the dreadful thought occurs, that if you yourself to-day think so badly of what you wrote ten years since, it is probable enough that on this day ten years hence (if you live to see it) you may think as badly of what you are writing to-day. Let us hope not. Let us trust that at length a standard of taste and judgment is reached from which we shall not ever materially swing away. Yet the pendulum will never be quite arrested as to your estimate of yourself. Now and then you will think yourself a block-head : by and bye you will think yourself very clever ; and your judgment will oscillate between these opposite poles of belief. Sometimes you will think that your

house is remarkably comfortable, sometimes that it is unendurably uncomfortable; sometimes you will think that your place in life is a very dignified and important one, sometimes that it is a very poor and insignificant one; sometimes you will think that some misfortune or disappointment which has befallen you is a very crushing one; sometimes you will think that it is better as it is. Ah, my brother, it is a poor, weak, wayward thing, the human heart!

You know, of course, how the pendulum of public opinion swings backwards and forwards. The truth lies somewhere about the middle of the arc it describes, in most cases. You know how the popularity of political men oscillates, from A, the point of greatest popularity, to B, the point of no popularity at all. Think of Lord Brougham. Once the pendulum swung far to the right: he was the most popular man in Britain. Then, for many years, the pendulum swung far to the left, into the cold regions of unpopularity, loss of influence, and opposition benches. And now, in his last days, the pendulum has come over to the right again. So with lesser men. When the new clergyman comes to a country parish, how high his estimation! Never was there preacher so impressive, pastor so diligent, man so frank and agreeable. By and bye his sermons are middling, his diligence middling; his manners rather stiff or rather too easy. In a year or two the pendulum rests at its proper point: and from that time onward the parson gets, in most cases, very nearly the credit he deserves. The like oscillation of public opinion and feeling exists in the case of unfavourable as of favourable judgments. A man commits a great crime. His guilt is thought awful. There is a general outcry for his condign punishment. He is sen-

tenced to be hanged. In a few days the tide begins to turn. His crime was not so great. He had met great provocation. His education had been neglected. He deserves pity rather than reprobation. Petitions are got up that he should be let off; and largely signed by the self-same folk who were loudest in the outcry against him. And instead of this fact, that those folk were the keenest against the criminal, being received (as it ought) as proof that their opinion is worth nothing at all, many will receive it as proof that their opinion is entitled to special consideration. The principle of the pendulum in the matter of criminals is well understood by the Old Bailey practitioners of New York and their worthy clients. When a New Yorker is sentenced to be hanged, he remains as cool as cucumber; for the New York law is, that a year must pass between the sentence and the execution. And long before the year passes, the public sympathy has turned in the criminal's favour. Endless petitions go up for his pardon. Of course he gets off. And indeed it is not improbable that he may receive a public testimonial. It cannot be denied that the natural transition in the popular feeling is from applauding a man to hanging him, and from hanging a man to applauding him.

Even so does the pendulum swing, and the world run away!



CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING CHURCHYARDS.

MANY persons do not like to go near a churchyard: some do not like even to hear a churchyard mentioned. Many others feel an especial interest in that quiet place — an interest which is quite unconnected with any personal associations with it. A great deal depends upon habit; and a great deal turns, too, on whether the churchyard which we know best is a locked-up, deserted, neglected place, all grown over with nettles; or a spot not too much retired, open to all passers-by, with trimly-mown grass and neat gravelled walks. I do not sympathize with the taste which converts a burying-place into a flower-garden or a fashionable lounge for thoughtless people: let it be the true ‘country churchyard,’ only with some appearance of being remembered and cared for. For myself, though a very commonplace person and not at all sentimentally inclined, I have a great liking for a churchyard. Hardly a day passes on which I do not go and walk up and down for a little in that which surrounds my church. Probably some people may regard me as extremely devoid of occupation, when I confess that daily, after breakfast, and before sitting down to my work (which is pretty hard, though they may not

think so), I walk slowly down to the churchyard, which is a couple of hundred yards off, and there pace about for a few minutes, looking at the old graves and the mossy stones. Nor is this only in summer-time, when the sward is white with daisies, when the ancient oaks around the gray wall are leafy and green, when the passing river flashes bright through their openings and runs chiming over the warm stones, and when the beautiful hills that surround the quiet spot at a little distance are flecked with summer light and shade ; but in winter too, when the bare branches look sharp against the frosty sky, and the graves look like wavelets on a sea of snow. Now, if I were anxious to pass myself off upon my readers as a great and thoughtful man, I might here give an account of the profound thoughts which I think in my daily musings in my pretty churchyard. But, being an essentially commonplace person (as I have no doubt about nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of my readers also are), I must here confess that generally I walk about the churchyard, thinking and feeling nothing very particular. I do not believe that ordinary people, when worried by some little care, or pressed down by some little sorrow, have only to go and muse in a churchyard in order to feel how trivial and transient such cares and sorrows are, and how very little they ought to vex us. To commonplace mortals, it is the sunshine within the breast that does most to brighten ; and the thing that has most power to darken is the shadow there. And the scenes and teachings of external nature have, practically, very little effect indeed. And so, when musing in the churchyard, nothing grand, heroical, philosophical, or tremendous ever suggests itself to me. I look with pleasure at the neatly cut walks and grass. I peep in at a window

of the church, and think how I am to finish my sermon for next Sunday. I read over the inscriptions on the stones which mark where seven of my predecessors sleep. I look vacantly at the lichens and moss which have overgrown certain tombstones three or four centuries old. And occasionally I think of what and where I shall be, when the village mason, whistling cheerfully at his task, shall cut out my name and years on the stone which will mark my last resting-place. But all these, of course, are commonplace thoughts, just what would occur to anybody else, and really not worth repeating.

And yet, although 'death, and the house appointed for all living,' form a topic which has been treated by innumerable writers, from the author of the book of Job to Mr. Dickens; and although the subject might well be vulgarized by having been, for many a day, the stock resort of every commonplace aimor at the pathetic; still the theme is one which never can grow old. And the experience and the heart of most men convert into touching eloquence even the poorest formula of set phrases about the tremendous Fact. Nor are we able to repress a strong interest in any account of the multitude of fashions in which the mortal part of man has been disposed of, after the great change has passed upon it. In a volume entitled *God's Acre*, written by a lady, one Mrs. Stone, and published a year or two since, you may find a great amount of curious information upon such points: and after thinking of the various ways of burial described, I think you will return with a feeling of home and of relief to the quiet English country churchyard. I should think that the shocking and revolting description of the burning of the remains of Shelley, published by Mr. Trelawney, in his *Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, will

go far to destroy any probability of the introduction of cremation in this country, notwithstanding the ingenuity and the eloquence of the little treatise published about two years ago by a Member of the College of Surgeons, whose gist you will understand from its title, which is *Burning the Dead; or, Urn-Sepulture Religiously, Socially, and Generally considered; with Suggestions for a Revival of the Practice, as a Sanitary Measure*. The choice lies between burning and burying: and the latter being universally accepted in Britain, it remains that it be carried out in the way most decorous as regards the deceased, and most soothing to the feelings of surviving friends. Every one has seen burying-places of all conceivable kinds, and every one knows how prominent a feature they form in the English landscape. There is the dismal corner in the great city, surrounded by blackened walls, where scarce a blade of grass will grow, and where the whole thing is foul and pestilential. There is the ideal country churchyard, like that described by Gray, where the old elms and yews keep watch over the graves where successive generations of simple rustics have found their last resting-place, and where in the twilight the owls hoot from the tower of the ivy-covered church. There is the bare enclosure, surrounded by four walls, and without a tree, far up the lonely Highland hill-side; and more lonely still, the little gray stone, rising above the purple heather, where rude letters, touched up by Old Mortality's hands, tell that one, probably two or three, rest beneath, who were done to death for what *they* firmly believed was their Redeemer's cause, by Claverhouse or Dalrymple. There is the churchyard by the bleak sea-shore, where coffins have been laid bare by the encroaching waves; and the niche in ca

thedral crypt, or the vault under the church's floor. I cannot conceive anything more irreverent than the American fashion of burying in unconsecrated earth, each family having its own place of interment in the corner of its own garden : unless it be the crotchet of the silly old peer, who spent the last years of his life in erecting near his castle-door, a preposterous building, the progress of which he watched day by day with the interest of a man who had worn out all other interest, occasionally lying down in the stone coffin which he had caused to be prepared, to make sure that it would fit him. I feel sorry, too, for the poor old Pope, who when he dies is laid on a shelf above a door in St. Peter's, where he remains till the next Pope dies, and then is put out of the way to make room for him ; nor do I at all envy the noble who has his family vault filled with coffins covered with velvet and gold, occupied exclusively by corpses of good quality. It is better surely to be laid, as Allan Cunningham wished, where we shall 'not be built over ;' where 'the wind shall blow and the daisy grow upon our grave.' Let it be among our kindred, indeed, in accordance with the natural desire ; but not on dignified shelves, not in aristocratic vaults, but lowly and humbly, where the Christian dead sleep for the Resurrection. Most people will sympathize so far with Beattie, though his lines show that he was a Scotchman, and lived where there are not many trees : —

Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down,
Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
With here and there a violet bestrown,
Fast by a brook, or fountain's murmuring wave ;
And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave !

But it depends entirely upon individual associations

and fancies where one would wish to rest after life's fitful fever: and I have hardly ever been more deeply impressed than by certain lines which I cut out of an old newspaper when I was a boy, and which set out a choicce far different from that of *The Minstrel*. They are written by Mr. Westwood, a true poet, though not known as he deserves to be. Here they are: —

Not there, not there!

Not in that nook, that ye deem so fair; —
Little reck I of the blue bright sky,
And the stream that floweth so murmuringly,
And the bending boughs, and the breezy air —

Not there, good friends, not there!

In the city churchyard, where the grass
Groweth rank and black, and where never a ray
Of that self-same sun doth find its way
Through the heaped-up houses' serried mass —
Wherc the only sounds are the voice of the throng
And the clatter of wheels as they rush along —
Or the plash of the rain, or the wind's hoarse cry
Or the busy tramp of the passer-by,
Or the toll of the bell on the heavy air —

Good friends, let it be *there*!

I am old, my friends — I am very old —
Fourscore and five — and bitter cold
Were that air on the hill-side far away;
Eighty full years, content, I trow,
Have I lived in the home where ye see me now,
And trod those dark streets day by day,
Till my soul doth love them; I love them all,
Each battered pavement, and blackened wall,
Each court and corner. Good sooth! to me
They are all comely and fair to see —
They have *old faces* — each one doth tell
A tale of its own, that doth like me well —
Sad or merry, as it may be,
From the quaint old book of my history.
And, friends, when this weary pain is past,
Fain would I lay me to rest at last

In their very midst; — full sure am I,
 How dark soever be earth and sky,
 I shall sleep softly — I shall know
 That the things I loved so here below
 Are about me still — so never care
 That my last home looketh all bleak and bare.
 Good friends, let it be *there*!

Some persons appear to think that it argues strength of mind and freedom from unworthy prejudice, to profess great indifference as to what becomes of their mortal part after they die. I have met with men who talked in a vapouring manner about leaving their bodies to be dissected; and who evidently enjoyed the sensation which such sentiments produced among simple folk. Whenever I hear any man talk in this way, my politeness, of course, prevents my telling him that he is an uncommonly silly person: but it does not prevent my thinking him one. It is a mistake to imagine that the soul is the entire man. Human nature, alike here and hereafter, consists of soul and body in union; and the body is therefore justly entitled to its own degree of thought and care. But the point, indeed, is not one to be argued; it is, as it appears to me, a matter of intuitive judgment and instinctive feeling; and I apprehend that this feeling and judgment have never appeared more strongly than in the noblest of our race. I hold by Burke, who wrote, ‘I should like that my dust should mingle with kindred dust; the good old expression, “family burying-ground,” has something pleasing in it, at least to *me*.’ Mrs. Stone quotes Lady Murray’s account of the death of her mother, the celebrated Grissell Baillie, which shows that that strong-minded and noble-hearted woman felt the natural desire: —

The next day she called me: gave directions about some few things

said she wished to be carried home to lie by my father, but that perhaps it would be too much trouble and inconvenience to us at that season, therefore left me to do as I pleased; but that, in a black purse in her cabinet, I would find money sufficient to do it, which she had kept by her for that use, that whenever it happened, it might not straiten us. She added, 'I have now no more to say or do:' tenderly embraced me, and laid down her head upon the pillow, and spoke little after that.

An instance, at once touching and awful, of care for the body after the soul has gone, is furnished by certain well-known lines written by a man not commonly regarded as weak-minded or prejudiced; and engraved by his direction on the stone that marks his grave. If I am wrong, I am content to go wrong with Shakspeare:

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here:
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

The most eloquent exposition I know of the religious aspect of the question, is contained in the concluding sentences of Mr. Melvill's noble sermon on the 'Dying Faith of Joseph.' I believe my readers will thank me for quoting it:—

It is not a Christian thing to die manifesting indifference as to what is done with the body. That body is redeemed: not a particle of its dust but was bought with drops of Christ's precious blood. That body is appointed to a glorious condition; not a particle of the corruptible but what shall put on incorruption; of the mortal that shall not assume immortality. The Christian knows this: it is not the part of a Christian to seem unmindful of this. He may, therefore, as he departs, speak of the place where he would wish to be laid. 'Let me sleep,' he may say, 'with my father and my mother, with my wife and my children; lay me not here, in this distant land, where my dust cannot mingle with its kindred. I would be chimed to my grave by my own village bell, and have my requiem sung where I was baptized into Christ.' Marvel ye at such last words? Wonder ye that one, whose spirit is just entering the separate state, should have this care for the body

which he is about to leave to the worms? Nay, he is a believer in Jesus as 'the Resurrection and the Life:' this belief prompts his dying words; and it shall have to be said of him as of Joseph, that 'by faith,' yea, 'by faith,' he 'gave commandment concerning his bones!'

If you hold this belief, my reader, you will look at a neglected churchyard with much regret; and you will highly approve of all endeavours to make the burying-place of the parish as sweet though solemn a spot as can be found within it. I have lately read a little tract, by Mr. Hill, the Rural Dean of North Frome, in the Diocese of Hereford, entitled *Thoughts on Churches and Churchyards*, which is well worthy of the attentive perusal of the country clergy. Its purpose is to furnish practical suggestions for the maintenance of decent propriety about the church and churchyard. I am not, at present, concerned with that part of the tract which relates to churches; but I may remark, in passing, that Mr. Hill's views upon that subject appear to me distinguished by great good sense, moderation, and taste. He does not discourage country clergymen, who have but limited means with which to set about ordering and beautifying their churches, by suggesting arrangements on too grand and expensive a scale: on the contrary, he enters with hearty sympathy into all plans for attaining a simple and inexpensive secmliness where more cannot be accomplished. And I think he hits with remarkable felicity the just mean between an undue and excessive regard to the mere externalities of worship, and a puritanical bareness and contempt for material aids, desiring, in the words of Archbishop Bramhall, that 'all be with due moderation, so as neither to render religion sordid and slut-rish, nor yet light and garish, but comely and venerable.

Equally judicious, and equally practical, are Mr. Hill's hints as to the ordering of churchyards. He laments that churchyards should ever be found where long, rank grass, briars, and nettles abound, and where neatly kept walks and graves are wanting. He goes on : —

And yet, how trifling an amount of care and attention would suffice to render neat, pretty, and pleasant to look upon, that which has oftentimes an unpleasing, desolate, and painful aspect. A few sheep occasionally (or better still, the scythe and shears now and then employed), with a trifling attention to the walks, once properly formed and gravelled, will suffice, when the fences are duly kept, to make any churchyard seemly and neat: a little more than this will make it ornamental and instructive.

It is possible that many persons might feel that flower-beds and shrubberies are not what they would wish to see in a churchyard; they might think they gave too garden-like and adorned a look to so solemn and sacred a spot; persons will not all think alike on such a matter: and yet something may be done in this direction with an effect which would please everybody. A few trees of the *arbor vitæ*, the cypress, and the Irish yew, scattered here and there, with firs in the hedge-rows or boundary fences, would be unobjectionable; while wooden baskets, or boxes, placed by the sides of the walks, and filled in summer with the fuchsia or scarlet geranium, would give our churchyards an exceedingly pretty, and perhaps not unsuitable appearance. Little clumps of snowdrops and primroses might also be planted here and there; for flowers may fitly spring up, bloom, and fade away, in a spot which so impressively tells us of death and resurrection: and where sheep even are never admitted, all these methods for beautifying a churchyard may be adopted. Shrubs and flowers on and near the graves, as is so universal in Wales, independently of their pretty effect, show a kindly feeling for the memory of those whose bodies rest beneath them; and how far to be preferred to those enormous and frightful masses of brick or stone which the country mason has, alas, so plentifully supplied!

In the case of a clergyman, a taste for keeping his churchyard in becoming order is just like a taste for keeping his garden and shrubbery in order: only let him begin the work, and the taste will grow. There is

latent in the mind of every man, unless he be the most untidy and unobservant of the species, a love for well-mown grass and for sharply outlined gravel-walks. My brethren, *credite experto*. I did not know that in my soul there was a chord that vibrated responsive to trim gravel and grass, till I tried, and lo! it was there. Try for yourselves: you do not know, perhaps, the strange affinities that exist between material and immaterial nature. If any youthful clergyman shall read these lines, who knows in his conscience that his churchyard-walks are grown up with weeds, and the graves covered with nettles, upon sight hereof let him summon his man-servant, or get a labourer if he have no man-servant. Let him provide a reaping-hook and a large new spade. These implements will suffice in the meantime. Proceed to the churchyard: do not get disheartened at its neglected look, and turn away. Begin at the entrance-gate. Let all the nettles and long grass for six feet on either side of the path be carefully cut down and gathered into heaps. Then mark out with a line the boundaries of the first ten yards of the walk. Fall to work and cut the edges with the spade; clear away the weeds and grass that have overspread the walk, also with the spade. In a little time you will feel the fascination of the sharp outline of the walk against the grass on each side. And I repeat, that to the average human being there is something inexpressibly pleasing in that sharp outline. By the time the ten yards of walk are cut, you will find that you have discovered a new pleasure and a new sensation; and from that day will date a love of tidy walks and grass;—and what more is needed to make a pretty churchyard? The fuchsias, geraniums, and so forth, are of the nature of luxuries, and they will follow

in due time : but grass and gravel are the foundation of rustic neatness and tidiness.

As for the treatise on *Burning the Dead*, it is interesting and eloquent, though I am well convinced that its author has been putting forth labour in vain. I remember the consternation with which I read the advertisements announcing its publication. I made sure that it must be the production of one of those wrong-headed individuals who are always proposing preposterous things, without end or meaning. Why on earth should we take to burning the dead? What is to be gained by recurring to a heathen rite, repudiated by the early Christians, who, as Sir Thomas Browne tells us, 'stickt not to give their bodies to be burnt in their lives, but detested that mode after death?' And wherefore do anything so horrible, and so suggestive of cruelty and sacrilege, as to consign to devouring flames even the unconscious remains of a departed friend? But after reading the essay, I feel that the author has a great deal to say in defence of his views. I am obliged to acknowledge that in many cases important benefits would follow the adoption of urn-sepulture. The question to be considered is, what is the best way to dispose of the mortal part of man when the soul has left it? A first suggestion might be to endeavour to preserve it in the form and features of life; and, accordingly, in many countries and ages, embalming in its various modifications has been resorted to. But all attempts to prevent the human frame from obeying the Creator's law of returning to the elements have miserably failed. And surely it is better a thousand times to 'bury the dead from our sight,' than to preserve a hideous and revolting mockery of the beloved form. The Egyptian mummies every one has heard of; but the most

remarkable instance of embalming in recent times is that of the wife of one Martin Van Butchell, who, by her husband's desire, was embalmed in the year 1775, by Dr. William Hunter and Mr. Carpenter, and who may be seen in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. She was a beautiful woman, and all that skill and science could do were done to preserve her in the appearance of life; but the result is nothing short of shocking and awful. Taking it, then, as admitted, that the body must return to the dust from whence it was taken, the next question is, How? How shall dissolution take place with due respect to the dead, and with least harm to the health and the feelings of the living?

The two fashions which have been universally used are, burial and burning. It has so happened that burial has been associated with Christianity, and burning with heathenism; but I shall admit at once that the association is not essential, though it would be hard, without very weighty reason indeed, to deviate from the long-remembered 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' But such weighty reason the author of this treatise declares to exist. The system of burial, he says, is productive of fearful and numberless evils and dangers to the living. In the neighbourhood of any large burying-place, the air which the living breathe, and the water which they drink, are impregnated with poisons the most destructive of health and life. Even where the damage done to air and water is inappreciable by our senses, it is a predisposing cause of 'headache, dysentery, sore throat, and low fever;' and it keeps all the population around in a condition in which they are the ready prey of all forms of disease. I shall not shock my readers by relating a host of horrible facts, proved by indisputable evidence, which are adduced

by the surgeon to show the evils of burial : and all these evils, he maintains, may be escaped by the revival of burning. Four thousand human beings die every hour ; and only by that swift and certain method can the vast mass of decaying matter which, while decaying, gives off the most subtle and searching poisons, be resolved with the elements without injury or risk to any one. So convinced has the French Government become of the evils of burial that it has patronized and encouraged one M. Bonneau, who proposes that instead of a great city having its neighbouring cemeteries, it should be provided with a building called *The Sarcophagus*, occupying an elevated situation, to which the bodies of rich and poor should be conveyed, and there reduced to ashes by a powerful furnace. And then M. Bonneau, Frenchman all over, suggests that the ashes of our friends might be preserved in a tasteful manner ; the funeral urn, containing these ashes, ‘replacing on our consoles and mantelpieces the ornaments of bronze clocks and china vases now found there.’ Our author, having shown that burning would save us from the dangers of burying, concludes his treatise by a careful description of the manner in which he would carry out the burning process. And certainly his plan contains as little to shock one as may be, in carrying out a system necessarily suggestive of violence and cruelty. There is nothing like the repulsiveness of the Hindoo burning, only half carried out, or even of Mr. Trelawney’s furnace for burning poor Shelley. I do not remember to have lately read anything more ghastly and revolting than the entire account of Shelley’s cremation. It says much for Mr. Trelawney’s nerves, that he was able to look on at it ; and it was no wonder that it turned Byron sick, and that Mr. Leigh Hunt kept beyond the sight of it. I

intended to have quoted the passage from Mr. Trelawney's book, but I really cannot venture to do so. But it is right to say that there were very good reasons for resorting to that melancholy mode of disposing of the poet's remains, and that Mr. Trelawney did all he could to accomplish the burning with efficiency and decency: though the whole story makes one feel the great physical difficulties that stand in the way of carrying out cremation successfully. The advocate of urn-sepulture, however, is quite aware of this, and he proposes to use an apparatus by which they would be entirely overcome. It is only fair to let him speak for himself; and I think the following passage will be read with interest:—

On a gentle eminence, surrounded by pleasant grounds, stands a convenient, well-ventilated chapel, with a high spire or steeple. At the entrance, where some of the mourners might prefer to take leave of the body, are chambers for their accommodation. Within the edifice are seats for those who follow the remains to the last: there is also an organ, and a gallery for choristers. In the centre of the chapel, embellished with appropriate emblems and devices, is erected a shrine of marble, some such like those which cover the ashes of the great and mighty in our old cathedrals, the openings being filled with prepared plate glass. Within this — a sufficient space intervening — is an inner shrine covered with bright non-radiating metal, and within this again is a covered sarcophagus of tempered fire-clay, with one or more longitudinal slits near the top, extending its whole length. As soon as the body is deposited therein, sheets of flame at an immensely high temperature rush through the long apertures from end to end, and acting as a combination of a modified oxy-hydrogen blowpipe, with the reverberatory furnace, utterly and completely consume and decompose the body, *in an incredibly short space of time*. Even the large quantity of water it contains is decomposed by the extreme heat, and its elements, instead of retarding, aid combustion, as is the case in fierce conflagrations. The gaseous products of combustion are conveyed away by flues; and means being adopted to consume anything like smoke, all that is observed from the outside is occasionally a quivering transparent ether floating away from the high steeple to mingle with the atmosphere.

At either end of the sarcophagus is a closely-fitting fire-proof door, that farthest from the chapel entrance communicating with a chamber which projects into the chapel and adjoins the end of the shrine. Here are the attendants, who, unseen, conduct the operation. The door at the other end of the sarcophagus, with a corresponding opening in the inner and outer shrine, is exactly opposite a slab of marble on which the coffin is deposited when brought into the chapel. The funeral service then commences according to any form decided on. At an appointed signal the end of the coffin, which is placed just within the opening in the shrine, is removed, and the body is drawn rapidly but gently and without exposure into the sarcophagus: the sides of the coffin, constructed for the purpose, collapse; and the wooden box is removed to be burned elsewhere.

Meantime the body is committed to the flames to be consumed, and the words 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust' may be appropriately used. The organ peals forth a solemn strain, and a hymn or requiem for the dead is sung. In a few minutes, or even seconds, and without any perceptible noise or commotion, all is over, and nothing but a few pounds or ounces of light ash remains. This is carefully collected by the attendants of the adjoining chamber: a door communicating with the chapel is thrown open; and the relic, enclosed in a vase of glass or other material, is brought in and placed before the mourners, to be finally enshrined in the funeral urn of marble, alabaster, stone, or metal.

Speaking for myself, I must say that I think it would cause a strange feeling in most people to part at the chapel-door with the corpse of one who had been very dear, and, after a few minutes of horrible suspense, during which they should know that it was burning in a fierce furnace, to see the vessel of white ashes brought back, and be told that *there* was all that was mortal of the departed friend. No doubt it may be weakness and prejudice, but I think that few could divest themselves of the feeling of sacrilegious violence. Better far to lay the brother or sister, tenderly as though still they felt, in the last resting-place, so soft and trim. It soothes *us*, if it does no good to *them*, and the sad change which we know is soon to follow is wrought only by the gentle hand of Nature. And only think of a man pointing to half-a-dozen

vases on his mantelpiece, and as many more on his cheffonier, and saying, 'There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest!'

No, no ; the thing will never do !

One of the latest examples of burning, in the case of a Christian, is that of Henry Laurens, the first President of the American Congress. In his will he solemnly enjoined upon his children that they should cause his body to be given to the flames. The Emperor Napoleon, when at St. Helena, expressed a similar desire ; and said, truly enough, that as for the Resurrection, *that* would be miraculous at all events, and it would be just as easy for the Almighty to accomplish that great end in the case of burning as in that of burial. And, indeed, the doctrine of the Resurrection is one that it is not wise to scrutinize too minutely—I mean as regards its rationale. It is best to simply hold by the great truth, that 'this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.' I presume that it has been shown beyond doubt that the material particles which make up our bodies are in a state of constant flux, the entire physical nature being changed every seven years, so that if all the particles which once entered into the structure of a man of fourscore were reassembled, they would suffice to make seven or eight bodies. And the manner in which it is certain that the mortal part of man is dispersed and assimilated to all the elements furnishes a very striking thought. Bryant has said, truly and beautifully,

All that tread
The globe, are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.

And James Montgomery, in a poem of his which is little known, and which is amplified and spoiled in the latest editions of his works, has suggested to us whither the mortal vestiges of these untold millions have gone. It is entitled *Lines to a Molehill in a Churchyard*.

Tell me, thou dust beneath my feet, —
 Thou dust that once hadst breath, —
 Tell me, how many mortals meet
 In this small hill of death.

The mole, that scoops with curious toil
 Her subterranean bed,
 Thinks not she plows a human soil,
 And mines among the dead.

Yet, whereso'er she turns the ground,
 My kindred earth I see:
 Once every atom of this mound
 Lived, breathed, and felt, like me.

Through all this hillock's crumbling mould
 Once the warm lifeblood ran:
 Here thine original behold,
 And here thy ruins, man!

By wafting winds and flooding rains,
 From ocean, earth, and sky,
 Collected here, the frail remains
 Of slumbering millions lie.

The towers and temples crushed by time,
 Stupendous wrecks, appear
 To me less mournfully sublime
 Than this poor molehill here.

Methinks this dust yet heaves with breath --
 Ten thousand pulses beat; —
 Tell me, in this small hill of death,
 How many mortals meet!

One idea, you see, beaten out rather thin, and expressed in a great many words, as was the good man's wont. And in these days of the misty and spasmodic school, I owe my readers an apology for presenting them with poetry which they will have no difficulty in understanding.

Amid a great number of particulars as to the burial customs of various nations, we find mention made of an odd way in which the natives of Thibet dignify their great people. They do not desecrate such by giving them to the earth, but retain a number of sacred dogs to devour them. Not less strange was the fancy of that Englishwoman, a century or two back, who had her husband burnt to ashes, and these ashes reduced to powder, of which she mixed some with all the water she drank, thinking, poor heart-broken creature, that thus she was burying the dear form within her own.

In rare cases I have known of the parson or the churchwarden turning his cow to pasture in the churchyard, to the sad desecration of the place. It appears, however, that worse than this has been done, if we may judge from the following passage quoted by Mrs. Stone:—

1540. Proceedings in the Court of Archdeaconry of Colchester, Colne Wake. Notatur per iconimos dicte ecclesie y^t the parson mysusithe the church-yard, for hogis do wrote up graves, and besse lie in the porche, and ther the pavements be broke up and soyle the porche; and ther is so mych catell y^t usithe the church-yarde, y^t is more liker a pasture than a halowed place.

It is usual, it appears, in the southern parts of France, to erect in the churchyard a lofty pillar, bearing a large lamp, which throws its light upon the cemetery during the night. The custom began in the twelfth or thirteenth

century. Sometimes the *lanterne des morts* was a highly ornamented chapel, built in a circular form, like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, in which the dead lay exposed to view in the days which preceded their interment: sometimes it was merely a hollow column, ascended by a winding stair inside, or by projections left for the purpose within. It must have been a striking sight when the traveller, through the dark night, saw far away the lonely flame that marked the spot where so many of his fellow-men had completed their journey.

One of the oddest things ever introduced into *Materia Medica* was the celebrated *Mummy Powder*. Egyptian mummies, being broken up and ground into dust, were held of great value as medicine both for external and internal application. Boyle and Bacon unite in commending its virtues: the latter, indeed, venturing to suggest that 'the mixture of balms that are glutinous' was the foundation of its power, though common belief held that the virtue was 'more in the Egyptian than in the spice.' Even in the seventeenth century mummy was an important article of commerce, and was sold at a great price. One Eastern traveller brought to the Turkey Company six hundred weight of mummy broken into pieces. Adulteration came into play in a manner which would have gratified the *Lancet* commission: the Jews collecting the bodies of executed criminals, filling them with common asphaltum, which cost little, and then drying them in the sun, when they became undistinguishable from the genuine article. And the maladies which mummy was held to cure are set forth in a list which we commend to the notice of Professor Holloway. It was 'to be taken in decoctions of marjoram, thyme, elder-

flower, barley, roses, lentils, jujubes, cummin-seed, carraway, saffron, cassia, parsley, with oxymel, wine, milk, butter, castor, and mulberries. Sir Thomas Browne, who was a good deal before his age, did not approve of the use of mummy. He says :

Were the efficacy thereof more clearly made out, we scarce conceive the use thereof allowable in physic: exceeding the barbarities of Cambyses, and turning old heroes into unworthy potions. Shall Egypt lend out her ancients unto chirurgeons and apothecaries, and Cheops and Psammetieus be weighed unto us for drugs? Shall we eat of Chamnes and Amasis in electuaries and pills, and be cured by cannibal mixtures? Surely such diet is miserable vampirism; and exceeds in horror the black banquet of Domitian, not to be paralleled except in those Arabian feasts wherein ghouls feed horribly.

I need hardly add that the world has come round to the great physician's way of thinking, and that mummy is not included in the pharmacopœia of modern days.

The monumental inscriptions of this country, as a general rule, furnish lamentable proof of the national bad taste. Somehow our peculiar genius seems not to lie in that direction; and very eminent men, who did most other things well, have signally failed when they tried to produce an epitaph. What with stilted extravagance and bombast on the one side, and profane and irreverent jesting on the other, our epitaphs, for the most part, would be better away. It was well said by Addison of the inscriptions in Westminster Abbey, — 'Some epitaphs are so extravagant that the dead person would blush; and others so excessively modest that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek and Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve-month.' And Fuller has hit the characteristics of a fitting epitaph when he said that 'the shortest, plainest, and truest epitaphs are the best.' In most cases the safe

plan is to give no more than the name and age, and some brief text of Scripture.

Every one knows that epitaphs generally are expressed in such complimentary terms as quite explain the question of the child, who wonderingly inquired where they buried the bad people. Mrs. Stone, however, quotes a remarkably out-spoken one, from a monument in Horselydown Church, in Cumberland. It runs as follows:—

Here lie the bodies
Of Thomas Bond and Mary his wife.
She was temperate, chaste, and charitable;
But
She was proud, peevish, and passionate.
She was an affectionate wife and a tender mother;
But
Her husband and child, whom she loved,
Seldom saw her countenance without a disgusting frown;
While she received visitors whom she despised with an endearing
smile.
Her behaviour was discreet towards strangers;
But
Imprudent in her family.
Abroad her conduct was influenced by good breeding;
But
At home by ill temper.

And so the epitaph runs on to considerable length, acknowledging the good qualities of the poor woman, but killing each by setting against it some peculiarly unamiable trait. I confess that my feeling is quite turned in her favour by the unmanly assault which her brother (the author of the inscription) has thus made upon the poor dead woman. If you cannot honestly say good of a human being on his grave-stone, then say nothing at all. There are some cases in which an exception may justly be made; and such a one, I think, was that of the infamous Francis Chartres, who died in 1731. He

was buried in Scotland, and at his funeral the populace raised a riot, almost tore his body from the coffin, and threw dead dogs into the grave along with it. Dr. Arbuthnot wrote his epitaph, and here it is : —

Here continueth to rot
The body of Francis Chartres :
Who, with an inflexible constancy,
and
Inimitable uniformity of life,
Persisted,
In spite of age and infirmities,
In the practice of every human vice,
Excepting prodigality and hypocrisy :
His insatiable avarice exempted him
from the first,
His matchless impudence from the
second.
Nor was he more singular
In the undeviating pravity of his
manners,
Than successful
In accumulating wealth
For without trade or profession,
Without trust of public money,
And without bribeworthy service,
He acquired, or more properly created,
A Ministerial Estate.
He was the only person of his time
Who could cheat without the mask of
honesty,
Retain his primeval meanness
When possessed of ten thousand a year.
And having daily deserved the gibbet for
what he did,
Was at last condemned for what he
could not do.
Oh ! indignant reader !
Think not his life useless to mankind.
Providence connived at his execrable designs.
To give to after ages
A conspicuous proof and example

Of how small estimation is exorbitant
 wealth
 In the sight of God,
 By his bestowing it on the most
 unworthy of all
 mortals.

If one *does* intend to make a verbal assault upon any man, it is well to do so in words which will sting and cut; and assuredly Arbuthnot has succeeded in his laudable intention. The character is justly drawn; and with the change of a very few words, it might correctly be inscribed on the monument of at least one Scotch and one English peer, who have died within the last half-century.

There are one or two extreme cases in which it is in good taste, and the effect not without sublimity, to leave a monument with no inscription at all. Of course this can only be when the monument is that of a very great and illustrious man. The pillar erected by Bernadotte at Frederickshall, in memory of Charles the Twelfth, bears not a word; and I believe most people who visit the spot feel that Bernadotte judged well. The rude mass of masonry, standing in the solitary waste, that marks where Howard the philanthropist sleeps, is likewise nameless. And when John Kyrle died in 1724, he was buried in the chancel of the church of Ross in Herefordshire, 'without so much as an inscription.' But the Man of Ross had his best monument in the lifted head and beaming eye of those he left behind him at the mention of his name. He never knew, of course, that the bitter little satirist of Twickenham would melt into unwonted tenderness in telling of all he did, and apologize nobly for his nameless grave:—

And what! no monument, inscription, stone?
 His race, his form, his name almost, unknown?

Who builds a church to God, and not to fame,
 Will never mark the marble with his name:
 Go, search it there, where to be born and die,
 Of rich and poor make all the history:
 Enough, that virtue filled the space between,
 Proved, by the ends of being, to have been!*

The two fine epitaphs written by Ben Jonson are well known. One is on the Countess of Pembroke: —

Underneath this marble hearse,
 Lies the subject of all verse:
 Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
 Death! ere thou hast slain another,
 Learned and fair, and good as she,
 Time shall throw a dart at thee.

And the other is the epitaph of a certain unknown Elizabeth: —

Wouldst thou hear what man can say
 In a little? — reader, stay.
 Underneath this stone doth lie
 As much beauty as could die;
 Which in life did harbour give,
 To more virtue than doth live.
 If at all she had a fault,
 Leave it buried in this vault:
 One name was Elizabeth,
 The other let it sleep with death:
 Fitter, where it died, to tell,
 Than that it lived at all. Farewell!

Most people have heard of the brief epitaph inscribed on a tombstone in the floor of Hereford Cathedral, which inspired one of the sonnets of Wordsworth. There is no name, no date, but the single word MISERRIMUS. The lines, written by herself, which are inscribed on the gravestone of Mrs. Hemans, in St. Anne's Church at Dublin, are very beautiful, but too well known to need quotation.

* Pope's *Moral Essays*. Epistle III.

And Longfellow, in his charming little poem of *Nuremberg*, has preserved the characteristic word in the epitaph of Albert Dürer : —

Emigravit is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies;
Dead he is not, — but departed, — for the artist never dies.

Perhaps some readers may be interested by the following epitaph, written by no less a man than Sir Walter Scott, and inscribed on the stone which covers the grave of a humble heroine whose name his genius has made known over the world. The grave is in the churchyard of Kirkpatrick-Irongray, a few miles from Dumfries : —

This stone was erected
By the Author of Waverley
To the memory of
Helen Walker
Who died in the year of God 1791.
This humble individual
practised in real life
the virtues
with which fiction has invested
the imaginary character
of
Jeanie Deans.
Refusing the slightest departure
from veracity
even to save the life of a sister,
she nevertheless showed her
kindness and fortitude
by rescuing her from the severity of the law;
at the expense of personal exertions
which the time rendered as difficult
as the motive was laudable.

Respect the grave of poverty
when combined with love of truth
and dear affection.

Although, of course, it is treasonable to say so, I con-

fess I think this inscription somewhat cumbrous and awkward. The antithesis is not a good one, between the difficulty of Jeanie's 'personal exertions' and the laudableness of the motive which led to them. And there is something not metaphysically correct in the combination described in the closing sentence — the combination of poverty, an outward condition, with 'truthfulness and affection, two inward characteristics. The only parallel phrase which I remember in literature is one which was used by Mr. Stiggins when he was explaining to Sam Weller what was meant by a moral pocket-handkerchief. 'It's them,' were Mr. Stiggins's words, 'as combines useful instruction with wood-cuts.' Poverty might co-exist with, or be associated with, any mental qualities you please, but assuredly it cannot correctly be said to enter into *combination* with any.

As for odd and ridiculous epitaphs, their number is great, and every one has the chief of them at his fingers' ends. I shall be content to give two or three, which I am quite sure hardly any of my readers ever heard of before. The following, which may be read on a tombstone in a country churchyard in Ayrshire, appears to me to be unequalled for irreverence. And let critics observe the skilful introduction of the dialogue form, giving the inscription a dramatic effect: —

Wha is it that's lying here? —
 Robin Wood, ye needna speer.
 Eh Robin, is this you?
 Ou aye, but I'm deid noo!

The following epitaph was composed by a village poet and wit, not unknown to me in my youth, for a rival poet, one Syme, who had published a volume of verses *On the Times* (not the newspaper).

Beneath this thistle,
 Skin, bone, and gristle,
 In Sexton Goudie's keepin' lies,
 Of poet Syme,
 Who fell to rhyme,
 (O bards beware!) a sacrifice.

Ask not at all,
 Where flew his saul,
 When of the body death bereft her:
 She, like his rhymes
 Upon the Times,
 Was never worth the speerin' after!

Speerin', I should mention, for the benefit of those ignorant of Lowland Scotch, means asking or inquiring.

It is recorded in history that a certain Mr. Anderson, who filled the dignified office of Provost of Dundee, died, as even provosts must. It was resolved that a monument should be erected in his memory, and that the inscription upon it should be the joint composition of four of his surviving colleagues in the magistracy. They met to prepare the epitaph; and after much consideration it was resolved that the epitaph should be a rhymed stanza of four lines, of which lines each magistrate should contribute one. The senior accordingly began, and having deeply ruminated he produced the following:—

Here lies Anderson, Provost of Dundee.

This formed a neat and striking introduction, going (so to speak) to the heart of things at once, but leaving room for subsequent amplification. The second magistrate perceived this, and felt that the idea was such a good one that it ought to be followed up. He therefore produced the line,

Here lies Him, here lies He:

thus repeating in different modifications the same grand thought, after the style which has been adopted by Burke, Chalmers, Melvill, and other great orators. The third magistrate, whose turn had now arrived, felt that the foundation had thus been substantially laid down, and that the time had come to erect upon it a superstructure of reflection, inference, or exclamation. With the simplicity of genius he wrote as follows, availing himself of a poet's license to slightly alter the ordinary forms of language : —

Hallelujah, Hallelujee!

The epitaph being thus, as it were, rounded and complete, the fourth contributor to it found himself in a difficulty ; wherefore add anything to that which needed and in truth admitted nothing more ? Still the stanza must be completed. What should he do ? He would fall back on the earliest recollections of his youth — he would recur to the very fount and origin of all human knowledge. Seizing his pen, he wrote thus : —

A. B. C. D. E. F. G. !

Whoever shall piece together these valuable lines, thus fragmentarily presented, will enter into the feelings of the Town Council, which bestowed a vote of thanks upon their authors, and caused the stanza to be engraven on the worthy provost's monument. I have not myself read it, but am assured it is in existence.

There was something of poor Thomas Hood's morbid taste for the ghastly, and the physically repulsive, in his fancy of spending some time during his last illness in drawing a picture of himself dead in his shroud. In his memoirs, published by his children, you may see the picture, grimly truthful : and bearing the legend, *He sang*

the Song of the Shirt. You may discover in what he drew, as well as in what he wrote, many indications of the humourist's perverted taste: and no doubt the knowledge that mortal disease was for years doing its work within, led his thoughts oftentimes to what was awaiting himself. He could not walk in an avenue of elm-trees, without fancying that one of them might furnish his coffin. When in his ear, as in Longfellow's, 'the green trees whispered low and mild,' their sound did not carry him back to boyhood, but onward to his grave. He listened, and there rose within

A secret, vague, prophetic fear,
As though by certain mark,
I knew the fore-ordained tree,
Within whose rugged bark,
This warm and living form shall find
Its narrow house and dark.

Not but that such thoughts are well in their due time and place. It is very fit that we should all sometimes try to realize distinctly what is meant when each of us repeats words four thousand years old, and says, 'I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.' Even with all such remembrances brought home to him by means to which we are not likely to resort, the good priest and martyr Robert Southwell tells us how hard he found it, while in buoyant life, to rightly consider his end. But in perfect cheerfulness and healthfulness of spirit, the human being who knows (so far as man can know) where he is to rest at last, may oftentimes visit that peaceful spot. It will do him good: it can do him no harm. The hard-wrought man may fitly look upon the soft green turf, some day to be opened for him; and think to himself, Not yet, I have

more to do yet ; but in a little while. Somewhere there is a place appointed for each of us, a place that is waiting for each of us, and that will not be complete till we are there. Well, we rest in the humble trust, that ‘through the grave and gate of death, we shall pass to our joyful resurrection.’ And we turn away now from the churchyard, recalling Bryant’s lines as to its extent :

Yet not to thy eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone ; nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world, with kings,
The powerful of the earth, the wise and good,
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun ; the vales,
Stretching in pensive quietness between ;
The venerable woods ; rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green ; and, poured round all,
Old ocean’s gray and melancholy waste, —
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the Great Tomb of Man !



CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING SUMMER DAYS.

THERE are some people whom all nature helps. They have somehow got the material universe on their side. What they say and do, at least upon important occasions, is so backed up by all the surroundings that it never seems out of keeping with these, and still less ever seems to be contradicted by these. When Mr. Midhurst* read his essay on the *Miseries of Human Life*, he had all the advantage of a gloomy, overcast day. And so the aspect of the external world was to the essay like the accompaniment in music to a song. The accompaniment, of course, has no specific meaning; it says nothing, but it appears to accord and sympathize with the sense conveyed by the song's words. But gloomy hills and skies and woods are to desponding views of life and man, even more than the sympathetic chords, in themselves meaningless. The gloomy world not merely accords with the desponding views, but seems somehow to back them. You are conscious of a great envioning Presence standing by and looking on approvingly. From all points in the horizon a voice, soft and undefined, seems to whisper to your heart, *All true, all too true.*

* See the New Series of *Friends in Council*.

Now, there are human beings who, in the great things they say and do, seldom fail of having this great, vague backing. There are others whom the grand current for the most part sets against. It is part of the great fact of Luck — the indubitable fact that there are men, women, ships, horses, railway-engines, whole railways, which are lucky, and others which are unlucky. I do not believe in the common theory of Luck, but no thoughtful or observant man can deny the fact of it. And in no fashion does it appear more certainly than in this, that in the case of some men cross-accidents are always marring them, and the effect they would have produced. The system of things is against them. They are not in every case unsuccessful, but whatever success they attain is got by brave fighting against wind and tide. At college they carried off many honours, but no such luck ever befell them as that some wealthy person should offer during their days some special medal for essay or examination, which they would have gained as of course. There was no extra harvest for them to reap : they could do no more than win all that was to be won. They go to the bar, and they gradually make their way ; but the day never comes on which their leader is suddenly taken ill, and they have the opportunity of earning a brilliant reputation by conducting in his absence a case in which they are thoroughly prepared. They go into the Church, and earn a fair character as preachers ; but the living they would like never becomes vacant, and when they are appointed to preach upon some important occasion, it happens that the ground is a foot deep with snow.

Several years since, on a Sunday in July, I went to afternoon service at a certain church by the sea-shore.

The incumbent of that church was a young clergyman of no ordinary talent; he is a distinguished professor now. It was a day of drenching rain and howling hurricane; the sky was black, as in mid-winter; the waves were breaking angry and loud upon the rocks hard by. The weather the previous week had been beautiful; the weather became beautiful again the next morning. There came just the one gloomy and stormy summer day. The young parson could not foresee the weather. What more fitting subject for a July Sunday than the teachings of the beautiful season which was passing over? So the text was, *Thou hast made summer*: it was a sermon on summer, and its moral and spiritual lessons. How inconsistent the sermon seemed with everything around! The outward circumstances reduced it to an absurdity. The congregation was diminished to a sixth of its usual number; the atmosphere was charged with a muggy vapour from sloppy garments and dripping umbrellas: and as the preacher spoke, describing vividly (though with the chastened taste of the scholar) blue skies, green leaves, and gentle breezes, ever and anon the storm outside drove the rain in heavy plashes upon the windows, and, looking through them, you could see the black sky and the fast-drifting clouds. I thought to myself, as the preacher went on under the cross influence of these surroundings, Now, I am sure you are in small things an unlucky man. No doubt the like happens to you frequently. You are the kind of man to whom the *Times* fails to come on the morning you specially wish to see it. Your horse falls lame on the morning when you have a long drive before you. Your manservant catches a sore throat, and is unable to go out, just when the visitor comes to whom you wish to show the neighboring coun-

try. I felt for the preacher. I was younger then, but I had seen enough to make me think how Mr. Snarling of the next parish (a very dull preacher, with no power of description) would chuckle over the tale of the summer sermon on the stormy day. That youthful preacher (not Mr. Snarling) had been but a few months in the church, and he probably had not another sermon to give in the unexpected circumstances: he must preach what he had prepared. He had fallen into error. I formed a resolution never to do the like. I was looking forward then with great enthusiasm to the work of my sacred profession: with enthusiasm which has only grown deeper and warmer through the experience of more than nine years. I resolved that if ever I thought of preaching a summer sermon, I would take care to have an alternative one ready for that day in case of unfavourable weather. I resolved that I would give my summer discourse only if external nature, in her soft luxuriant beauty, looked summer-like: a sweet pervading accompaniment to my poor words, giving them a force and meaning far beyond their own. What talk concerning summer skies is like the sapphire radiance, so distant and pure, looking in through the church windows? You do not remember how blue and beautiful the sky is, unless when you are looking at it: nature is better than our remembrance of her. What description of a leafy tree equals that noble, soft, massive, luxuriant object which I looked at for half-an-hour yesterday through the window of a little country church, while listening to the sermon of a friend? Do not think that I was inattentive. I heard the sermon with the greater pleasure and profit for the sight. It is characteristic of the preaching of a really able man, preaching what he himself has felt, that all he says appears (as a

general rule) in harmony with all the universe; while the preaching of a commonplace man, giving us from memory mere theological doctrine which has been drilled into him, and which he repeats because he supposes it must be all right, seems inconsistent with all the material universe, or at least quite apart from it. Yet, even listening to that excellent sermon (whose masculine thought was very superior to its somewhat slovenly style), I thought, as I looked at the beautiful tree rising in the silent churchyard,—the stately sycamore, so bright green, with the blue sky all around it,—how truly John Foster wrote, that when standing in January at the foot of a large oak, and looking at its bare branches, he vainly tried to picture to himself what that tree would be in June. The reality would be far richer and finer than anything he could imagine on the winter day. Who does not know this? The green grass and the bright leaves in spring are far greener (you see when they come back) than you had remembered or imagined; the sunshine is more golden, and the sky more bright. God's works are better and more beautiful than our poor idea of them. Though I have seen them and loved them now for more than thirty summers, I have felt this year, with something of almost surprise, how exquisitely beautiful are summer foliage and summer grass. Here they are again, fresh from God! The summer world is incomparably more beautiful than any imagination could picture it on a dull December day. You did not know on New Year's day, my reader, how fair a thing the sunshine is. And the commonest things are the most beautiful. Flowers are beautiful: he must be a black-guard who does not love them. Summer seas are beautiful, so exquisitely blue under the blue summer sky.

But what can surpass the beauty of green grass and green trees! Amid such things let me live; and when I am gone, let green grass grow over me. I would not be buried beneath a stone pavement, not to sleep in the great Abbey itself.

My summer sermon has never been written, and so has never been preached; I doubt whether I could make much of the subject, treated as it ought to be treated there. But an essay is a different matter, notwithstanding that a dear, though sarcastic friend says that my essays are merely *sermons played in polka time*; the thought of sermons, to wit, lightened somewhat by a somewhat lighter fashion of phrase and illustration. And all that has hitherto been said is introductory to remarking, that I stand in fear of what kind of day it may be when my reader shall see this essay, which as yet exists but vaguely in the writer's mind; and upon four pieces of paper, three large and one small. If your eye lights upon this page on a cold, bleak day; if it be wet and plashy; above all, if there be east wind, read no further. Keep this essay for a warm, sunshiny day; it is only then that you will sympathize with its author. For amid a dismal, rainy, stormy summer, we have reached fair weather at last; and this is a lovely, sunny summer morning. And what an indescribably beautiful thing is a summer day! I do not mean merely the hours as they pass over; the long light; the sun going up and going down; but all that one associates with summer days, spent in sweet rural scenes. There is great variety in summer days. There is the warm, bright, still summer day; when everything seems asleep, and the topmost branches of the tall trees do not stir in the azure air. There is the breezy summer day, when

warm breaths wave these topmost branches gently to and fro, and you stand and look at them; when sportive winds bend the green corn as they swiftly sweep over it; when the shadows of the clouds pass slowly along the hills. Even the rainy day, if it come with soft summer-like rain, is beautiful. People in town are apt to think of rain as a mere nuisance; the chief good it does there is to water the streets more generally and thoroughly than usual; a rainy day in town is equivalent to a bad day; but in the country, if you possess even the smallest portion of the earth, you learn to rejoice in the rain. You go out in it; you walk about and enjoy the sight of the grass momentarily growing greener; of the trees looking refreshed, and the evergreens gleaming, the gravel walks so free from dust, and the roads watered so as to render them beautifully compact, but not at all sloppy or muddy; summer rain never renders well-made country roads sloppy or muddy. There is a pleasure in thinking that you have got far ahead of man or machine; and you heartily despise a watering-cart, while enjoying a soft summer shower. And after the shower is over, what fragrance is diffused through the country air; every tree and shrub has an odour which a summer shower brings out, and which senses trained to perception will perceive. And then, how full the trees and woods are of the singing of birds! But there is one feeling which, if you live in the country, is common to all pleasant summer days, but particularly to sunshiny ones; it is that you are doing injustice to nature, that you are losing a great deal, if you do not stay almost constantly in the open air. You come to grudge every half hour that you are within doors, or busied with things that call you off from observing and thinking of all the

beauty that is around you everywhere. That fair scene, — trees, grass, flowers, sky, sunshine, is there to be looked at and enjoyed; it seems wrong, that with such a picture passing on before your eyes, your eyes should be turned upon anything else. Work, especially mental work, is always painful; always a thing you would shrink from if you could; but how strongly you shrink from it on a beautiful summer morning! On a gloomy winter day you can walk with comparative willingness into your study after breakfast, and spread out your paper, and begin to write your sermon. For although writing the sermon is undoubtedly an effort; and although all sustained effort partakes of the nature of pain; and although pain can never be pleasant; still, after all, apart from other reasons which impel you to your work, you cannot but feel that really if you were to turn away from your task of writing, there is nothing to which you could take that you would enjoy very much more than itself. And even on the fairest summer morning, you can, if you are living in town, take to your task with comparative ease. Somehow, in town, the weather is farther off from you; it does not pervade all the house, as it does in the country: you have not windows that open into the garden: through which you see green trees and grass every time you look up; and through which you can in a minute, without the least change of dress, pass into the verdant scene. There is all the difference in the world, between the shadiest and greenest public garden or park even within a hundred yards of your door; and the green shady little spot that comes up to your very window. The former is no very great temptation to the busy scholar of rural tastes; the latter is almost irresistible. A hundred

yards are a long way to go, with purpose prepease of enjoying something so simple as the green earth. After having walked even a hundred yards, you feel that you need a more definite aim. And the grass and trees seem very far away, if you see them at the end of a vista of washing your hands, and putting on another coat and other boots, and still more of putting on gloves and a hat. Give me the little patch of grass, the three or four shady trees, the quiet corner of the shrubbery, that comes up to the study window, and which you can reach without even the formality of passing through the hall and out by the front door. If you wish to enjoy nature in the summer-time, you must attend to all these little things. What stout old gentleman but knows that when he is seated snugly in his easy chair by the winter evening fireside, he would take up and read many pages in a volume which lay within reach of his arm, though he would do without the volume, if in order to get it he had to take the slight trouble of rising from his chair and walking to a table half a dozen yards off? Even so must nature be brought within easy reach of even the true lover of nature; otherwise on a hundred occasions, all sorts of little, faneiful hindrances will stand between him and her habitual appreeiation. A very small thing may prevent your doing a thing which you even wish to do; but which you do not wish with any special exeitement, and which you may do at any time. I daresay some reader would have written months since to a friend in India to whom he promised faithfully to write frequently, but that when he sat down once or twice to write, and pulled out his paper-drawer, he found that all the thin Indian paper was done. And so the upshot is, that the friend has been a year out; and you have never written to him at all.

But to return to the point from which this deviation proceeded, I repeat, that on a fine summer morning in the country it is excessively difficult to take to your work. Apart from the repellent influence which is in work itself, you think that you will miss so much. You go out after breakfast (with a wide-awake hat, and no gloves) into the fresh atmosphere. You walk round the garden. You look particularly at the more eminent roses, and the largest trees. You go to the stable-yard, and see what is doing there. There are twenty things to think of: numberless little directions to give. You see a weedy corner, and *that* must not be suffered: you see a long spray of a climbing rose that needs training. You look into the corn-chest: the corn is almost finished. You have the fact impressed upon you that the old potatoes are nearly done, and the new ones hardly ready for use. These things partake of the nature of care: if you do not feel very well, you will regard them as worries. But it is no care nor worry to walk down to your gate, to lean upon it, and to look at the outline of the hills: nor to go out with your little children, and walk slowly along the country lane outside your gate, relating for the hundredth time the legend of the renowned giant-killer, or the enchanted horse that flew through the air; to walk on till you come to the bridge, and there sit down, and throw in stones for your dog to dive after, while various shouts (very loud to come from such little mouths) applaud his success. How crystal-clear the water of the river! It is six feet deep, yet you may see every pebble of its bed. An undefined laziness possesses you. You would like to sit here, and look, and think, all day. But of course you will not give in to the temptation. Slowly you return to your door: unwillingly you enter

it: reluctantly you take to your work. Until you have got somewhat into the spirit of your task, you cannot help looking sometimes at the roses which frame your window, and the green hill you see through it, with white sheep. And even when you have got your mind under control, and the lines flow more willingly from your pen, you cannot but look out occasionally into the sunshiny, shady corner in your view, and think you should be there. And when the prescribed pages are at length completed, how delightful to lock them up, and be off into the air again! You are far happier now than you were in the morning. The shadow of your work was upon you then: now you may with a pleased conscience, and under no sense of pressure, saunter about, and enjoy your little domain. Many things have been accomplished since you went indoors. The weeds are gone from the corner: the spray of the rose has been trained. The potato-beds have been examined: the potatoes will be all ready in two days more. Sit down in the shade, warm yet cool, of a great tree. Now is the time to read the *Saturday Review*, especially the article that pitches into you. What do you care for it? I don't mean that you despise it: I mean that it causes you no feeling but one of amusement and pleasure. You feel that it is written by a clever man and a gentleman: you know that there is not a vestige of malice in it. You would like to shake hands with the writer, and to thank him for various useful hints. As for reviewing which is truly malignant — that which deals in intentional misrepresentation and coarse abuse — it is practically unknown in respectable periodicals. And wherever you may find it (as you sometimes may) you ought never to be angry with the man who did it: you ought to be

sorry for him. Depend upon it, the poor fellow is in bad health or in low spirits: no one but a man who is really unhappy himself will deliberately set himself to annoy any one else. It is the misery, anxiety, poverty, which are wringing the man's heart, that make their pitiful moan in that bitter article. Make the poor man better off, and he will be better natured.

And so, my friend, now that our task is finished, let us go out in this kindly temper to enjoy the summer day. But you must first assure your mind that your work is really finished. You cannot thus simply enjoy the summer day, if you have a latent feeling rankling at your heart that you are neglecting something that you ought to do. The little jar of your moral being caused by such a feeling, will be like the horse-hair shirt, will be like the peas in the pilgrim's shoes. So, clerical reader, after you have written your allotted pages of sermon, and answered your few letters, turn to your tablet-diary, or whatever contrivance you have for suggesting to your memory the work you have to do. If you have marked down some mere call to make, *that* may fairly enough be postponed on this hot day. But look at your list of sick, and see when you visited each last, and consider whether there be any you ought to visit to-day. And if there be, never mind though the heat be sweltering and the roads dusty and shadeless: never mind though the poor old man or woman lives five miles off, and though your horse is lame: get ready, and walk away as slowly as you can, and do your duty. You are not the reader I want: you are not the man with whom I wish to think of summer days: if you could in the least enjoy the afternoon, or have the faintest pleasure in your roses and your grass, with the thought of that neglected

work hanging over you. And though you may return four hours hence, fagged and jaded, you will sit with a pleased heart down to dinner, and you will welcome the twilight when it comes, with the cheerful sense of duty done and temptation resisted. But upon my ideal summer day, I suppose that after looking over your sick-list, and all your memoranda, you find that there is nothing to do that need take you to-day beyond your own little realm. And so, with the delightful sense of leisure to breathe and think, you walk forth into the green shade to spend the summer afternoon. Bring with you two or three books : bring the *Times* that came that morning : you will not read much, but it is pleasant to know that you may read if you choose : and then sit down upon a garden-seat, and think and feel. Do you not feel, my friend of even five-and-thirty, that there is music yet in the mention of summer days ? Well, enjoy that music now, and the vague associations which are summoned up by the name. Do not put off the enjoyment of these things to some other day. You will never have more time, nor better opportunity. The little worries of the present cease to sting in the pensive languor of the season. Enjoy the sunshine and the leaves while they last : they will not last long. Grasp the day and hold it and rejoice in it : some time soon you will find of a sudden that the summer time has passed away. You come to yourself, and find it is December. The earth seems to pause in its orbit in the dreary winter days : it hurries at express speed through summer. You wish you could put on a break, and make time go on more slowly. Well, watch the sandgrains as they pass. Remark the several minutes, yet without making it a task to do so. As you sit there, you will think of old sum-

mer days long ago : of green leaves long since faded of sunsets gone. Well, each had its turn : the present has nothing more. And let us think of the past without being lackadaisical. Look now at your own little children at play : *that* sight will revive your flagging interest in life. Look at the soft turf, feel the gentle air : these things are present now. What a contrast to the hard, repellent earth of winter ! I think of it like the difference between the man of sternly logical mind, and the genial, kindly man with both head and heart ! I take it for granted that you agree with me in holding such to be the true type of man. Not but what some people are proud of being all head and no heart. There is no flummery about *them*. It is stern, severe sense and principle. Well, my friends, say I to such, you are (in a moral sense) deficient of a member. Fancy a mortal hopping through creation, and boasting that he was born with only one leg ! Or even if you have a little of the kindly element, but very little when compared with the logical, you have not much to boast of. Your case is analogous to that of the man who has two legs indeed, but one of them a great deal longer than the other.

It is pleasanter to spend the summer days in an inland country place, than by the seaside. The sea is too glaring in sunshiny weather ; the prospects are too extensive. It wearies eyes worn by much writing and reading to look at distant hills across the water. The true locality in which to enjoy the summer time is a richly-wooded country, where you have hedges and hedge-rows, and clumps of trees everywhere : where objects for the most part are near to you ; and, above all, are green. It is pleasant to live in a district where the roads are not

great broad highways, in whose centre you feel as if you were condemned to traverse a strip of arid desert stretching through the landscape; and where any carriage short of a four-in-hand looks so insignificantly small. Give me country lanes: so narrow that their glare does not pain the eye upon even the sunniest day: so narrow that the eye without an effort takes in the green hedges and fields on either side as you drive or walk along.

And now, looking away mentally from this cool shady verdure amid which we are sitting, let us think of summer days elsewhere. Let us think of them listlessly, that we may the more enjoy the quiet here: as a child on a frosty winter night, snug in his little bed, puts out a foot for a moment into the chilly expanse of sheet that stretches away from the warm nest in which he lies, and then pulls it swiftly back again, enjoying the cozy warmth the more for this little reminder of the bitter chill. Here, where the air is cool, pure, and soft, let us think of a hoarding round some old house which the labourers are pulling down, amid clouds of the white, blinding, parching dust of lime, on a sultry summer day. I can hardly think of any human position as worse, if not intended directly as a position of torture. I picture, too, a crowded wharf on a river in a great town, with ships lying alongside. There is a roar of passing drays, a cracking of draymen's whips, a howling of the draymen. There is hot sunshine; there are clouds of dust; and I see several poor fellows wheeling heavy casks in barrows up a narrow plank into a ship. Their faces are red and puffy with the exertion: their hair is dripping. Ah, the summer day is hard upon these poor fellows! But it would be pleasant to-day to drive a locomotive engine through a fine agricultural country, particularly if one were driv-

ing an express train, and so were not worried by perpetual stoppages. I have often thought that I should like to be an engine-driver. Should any revolution or convulsion destroy the Church, it is to that field of industry that I should devote my energies. I should stipulate not to drive luggage-trains; and if I had to begin with third-class passenger-trains, I have no doubt that in a few months, by dint of great punctuality and carefulness, and by having my engine always beautifully clean and bright, I should be promoted to the express. There was a time when driving a locomotive was not so pleasant as now. In departed days, when the writer was wont to stand upon the foot-plates, through the kindness of engine-driving friends now far away, there was a difficulty in looking out ahead: the current of air was so tremendous, and particles of dust were driven so viciously into one's eyes. But advancing civilization has removed that disadvantage. A snug shelter is now provided for the driver: an iron partition arises before him, with two panes of glass through which to look out. The result is that he can maintain a far more effectual look-out; and that he is in great measure protected from wind and weather. Yes, it would be pleasant to be an engine-driver, especially on such a day as this. Pleasant to look at the great train of carriages standing in the station before starting: to see the piles of luggage going up through the exertions of hot porters: to see the numbers of passengers, old and young, cool and flurried, with their wraps, their newspapers, their books, at length arranged in the soft, roomy interiors; and then the sense of power, when by the touch of a couple of fingers upon the lever, you make the whole mass of luggage, of life, of human interests and cares, start gently into motion; till, gather-

ing speed as it goes, it tears through the green stillness of the summer noon, amid daisied fields, through little woody dells, through clumps of great forest-trees, within sight of quiet old manor houses, across little noisy brooks and fair broad rivers, beside churchyard walls and grey ivied churches, alongside of roads where you see the pretty phaeton, the lordly coach, the lumbering waggon, and get glimpses that suggest a whole picture of the little life of numbers of your fellow-men, each with heart and mind and concerns and fears very like your own. Yes, my friend, if you rejoice in fair scenery, if you sympathize with all modes of human life — if you have some little turn for mechanics, for neatness and accuracy, for that which faithfully does the work it was made to do, and neither less nor more : retain it in your mind as an ultimate end, that you may one day drive a locomotive engine. You need not of necessity become greasy of aspect ; neither need you become black. I never have known more tidy, neat, accurate, intelligent, sharp, punctual, responsible, God-fearing, and truly respectable men, than certain engine-drivers.

Remember the engine must be a locomotive engine. Your taste for scenery and life will not be gratified by employment on a stationary one. And it is fearfully hot work on a summer day to take charge of a stationary steam-engine ; while (perhaps you would not think it) to drive a locomotive is perfectly cool work. You never feel, in that rapid motion, the raging flame that is doing its work so near you. The driver of the express train may be a man of large sympathies, of cheerful heart, of tolerant views ; the man in charge of the engine of a coal-pit or factory, even of a steam-ship, is apt to acquire contracted ways of thinking, and to be

come somewhat cynical and gloomy in his ideas as to the possible amelioration of society. It cannot be a pleasing employment, one would think, on a day like this, to sit and watch a great engine fire, and mend it when needful. *That* occupation would not be healthful, either to mind or body. I dare say you remember the striking and beautiful description in Mr. Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop*, of a man who had watched and fed a furnace-fire for years, till he had come to think of it as a living being. The fire was older than he was; it had never gone out since before he was born. I can imagine, perfectly well, what kind of effect such a mode of life would have had on myself. And very few readers are likely to have within themselves an intellectual and moral fibre of bent and nature so determined, that they are not what they are, mainly through the influence of the external circumstances which have been acting upon them all through life. Did you ever think to yourself that you would like to make trial for a few days' space, of certain modes of life very different from your own, and very different from each other? I have done so many a time. And a lazy summer afternoon here in the green shade is the time to try and picture out such. Think of being to-day in a stifling counting-house in the hot bustling town. I have been especially interested in a glazed closet which I have seen in a certain immensely large and very crowded shop in a certain beautiful city. It is a sort of little office partitioned off from the shop; it has a sloping table, with three or four huge books bound in parchment. There is a ceaseless bustle, crush, and hum of talking outside; and inside there are clerks sitting writing, and receiving money through little pigeon-holes. I should like to sit for two or three days in a

corner of that little retreat; and to write a sermon there. It would be curious to sit there to-day in the shadow, and to see the warm sunbeams only outside through a distant window, resting on sloping roofs. If one did not get seasick, there would be something fresh in a summer day at sea. It is always cool and breezy there, at least in these latitudes, on the warmest day. Above all there is no dust. Think of the luxurious cabin of a fine yacht to-day. Deep cushions; rich curtains; no tremor of machinery; flowers, books, carpets inches thick; and through the windows, dim hills and blue sea. Then, flying away in spirit, let us go to-day (only in imagination) into the Courts of Law at Westminster. The atmosphere on a summer day in these scenes is always hot and ehoky. There is a suggestion of summer time in the sunshine through the dusty lanterns in the roofs. Thinking of these courts, and all their belongings and associations, here on this day, is like the child already mentioned when he puts his foot into a very eold eorner of his bed, that he may pull it baek with special sense of what a blessing it is that he is not bodily in that very eold eorner. Yes, let us enjoy this spot where we are, the more keenly, for thinking of the very last plaece in this world where we should like to-day to be. I went lately (on a bright day in May) to revive old remembrances of Westminster Hall. The judges of the present time are very able and ineorruptible men; but they are much uglier than the judges I remeber in my youth. Several of them, in their peeuiliar attire, hardly looked like human beings. Almost all wore wigs a great deal too large for them; I mean much too thiek and massive. The Queen's Counsel, for the most part, seemed much younger than they used to

be ; but I was aware that this phenomenon arose from the fact that I myself was older. And various barristers, who fifteen years since were handsome, smooth-faced young men, had now a complexion rough as a nutmeg-grater, and red with that unhealthy colour which is produced by long hours in a poisonous atmosphere. The Courts at Westminster, for cramped space and utter absence of ventilation, are nothing short of a disgrace to a civilized nation. But the most painful reflection which they suggest to a man with a little knowledge of the practical working of law, is, how vainly human law strives to do justice. There, on the benches of the various Courts, you have a number of the most able and honest men in Britain : skilled by long practice to distinguish between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood ; and yet, in five cases out of six that come before them, they signally fail of redressing the wrongs brought before them. Unhappily, in the nature of things, much delay must occur in all legal procedure ; and further, the machinery of the law cannot be set in motion unless at very considerable expense. Now, every one knows that delay in gaining a legal decision of a debated question, very often amounts to a decision against both parties. What enjoyment of the summer days has the harassed suitor, waiting in nervous anxiety for the judgment or the verdict which may be his ruin ? For very small things may be the ruin of many men. A few pounds to be paid may dip an honest man's head under water for years, or for life. But the great evil of the law, after all, is, that it costs so much. I am aware that this may be nobody's fault ; it may be a vice inherent in the nature of things. Still, where the matter in question is of no very great amount, it is a

fact that makes the wise man willing rather to take injustice than to go to law. A man meets with an injury ; he sustains some wrong. He brings his action ; the jury give him ten or twenty pounds damages. The jury fancy that this sum will make him amends for what he has lost or suffered ; they fancy that of course he will get this sum. What would the jury think if told that he will never get a penny of it ? It will all go (and probably a good deal more) for extra costs ; that is, the costs the winning party will have to pay his own attorney, besides the costs in the cause which the losing party has to pay. No one profits pecuniarily by that verdict or that trial, except the lawyers on either side. And does it not reduce the administration of justice to an absurdity, to think that in the majority of cases, the decision, no matter on which side, does no good to the man in whose favour it is given.

Another thing which makes the courts of law a sad sight is, that probably in no scene in human affairs are disappointment and success set in so sharp contrast — brought so close together. There, on the bench, dignified, keen, always kind and polite (for the days of bullying have gone by), sits the Chief Justice — a peer (if he pleases to be one) — a great, distinguished, successful man ; his kindred all proud of him. And there, only a few yards off, sharp-featured, desponding, soured, sits poor Mr. Briefless, a disappointed man, living in lonely chambers in the Temple : a hermit in the great wilderness of London ; in short, a total failure in life. Very likely he absurdly over-estimates his talents, and what he could have done if he had had the chance ; but it is at least possible that he may have in him the genius of another Follett, wasting sadly and uselessly away. Now,

of course, in all professions, and all walks of life, there are success and failure ; but there is none, I think, in which poor failure must bear so keenly the trial of being daily and closely set in contrast with flushed success. Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown were rival suitors for the hand of Miss Jones ; Mr. Smith succeeded, and Mr. Brown failed ; but though Mr. Brown feels his mortification severely even as things are, it would be a great deal worse if he were compelled to follow at a hundred yards' distance Mr. Smith and Miss Jones in their moonlight walks, and contemplate their happiness ; to be present when they are married, and daily to attend them throughout their marriage excursion. Or some one else gets the bishopric you wished for ; but you are not obliged daily to contemplate the cathedral and the palace which you had hoped to call your own. In most cases in this world failure may look away from the success which makes its eyes sore and its heart heavy. You try to have a kindly feeling towards the man who succeeded where you failed, and in time you have it ; but just at first you would not have liked to have had ever before you the visible manifestation of his success and your failure. You must have a very sweet nature, and (let me say it) much help from a certain high Quarter, if, without the least envy or jealousy, genially and unsoured, you can daily look upon the man who, without deserving to beat you, actually did beat you ; — at least while the wound is fresh.

And while talking of disappointment and success in courts of law, let me remark, that petty success sometimes produces, in vulgar natures, manifestations which are inexpressibly disgusting. Did you ever remark the exultation of some low attorney when he had succeeded

in snapping a verdict in some contemptible case which he had taken up and carried on upon speculation? I have witnessed such a thing, and cannot but say that it appeared to me one of the most revolting and disgusting passages which it is possible that human nature should assume. I think I see the dirty, oily-looking animal, at once servile and insolent, with trickery and rascality in every line of his countenance, rubbing his hands in the hour of his triumph, and bustling about to make immediate preparation for availing himself of it. And following him, also sneakily exulting, I see an object more dirty, more oily-looking, than the low attorney; it is the low attorney's clerk. And on such an occasion, glancing at the bench, when the judgment-seat was occupied by a judge who had not yet learned never to look as if he thought or felt anything in particular, I have discerned upon the judicial countenance an expression of disgust as deep as my own.

Pleasanter scenes come up this afternoon with the mention of summer days. I see depths of wood, where all the light is coolly green, and the rippling brook is crystal clear. I see vistas through pines, like cathedral vaults; the space enclosed looks on a sunshiny day almost black, and a bit of bright blue sky at the end of each is framed by the trees into the likeness of a Gothic window. I see walls of gray rock on either side of a river, noisy and brawling in winter time, but now quiet and low. For two or three miles the walls of rock stretch onward; there are thick woods above them, and here and there a sunny field: masses of ivy clothe the rock in places; long sprays of ivy hang over. I walk on in thought till I reach the opening of the glen; here a

green bank slopes upward from a dark pool below, and there is a fair stretch of champaign country beyond the river; on the summit of the green bank, on this side, mouldering, grey, ivied, lonely, stand the ruins of the monastery, which has kept its place here for seven hundred years. I see the sky-framing eastern window, its tracery gone. There are masses of large daisies varying the sward, and the sweet fragrance of young clover is diffused through all the air. I turn aside, and walk through lines of rose-trees in their summer perfection. I hear the drowsy hum of the laden bees. Suddenly it is the twilight, the long twilight of Scotland, which would sometimes serve you to read by at eleven o'clock at night. The crimson flush has faded from the bosom of the river; if you are alone, its murmur begins to turn to a moan; the white stones of the churchyard look spectral through the trees. I think of poor Doctor Adam, the great Scotch schoolmaster of the last century, the teacher of Sir Walter Scott, and his last words, when the shadow of death was falling deeper — 'It grows dark, boys; you may go.' Then, with the professional bias, I go to a certain beautiful promise which the deepening twilight seldom fails to suggest to me; a promise which tells us how the Christian's day shall end, how the day of life might be somewhat overcast and dreary, but light should come on the darkened way at last. 'It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light.' I think of various senses in which it might be shown that these words speak truly; in which its great principle holds good, that signal blessing shall come when it is needed most and expected

least ; but I think mainly how, sometimes, at the close of the echequered and sober day, the Better Sun has broken through the clouds, and made the flaming west all purple and gold. I think how always the purer light comes, if not in this world, then in a better. Bowing his head to pass under the dark portal, the Christian lifts it on the other side, in the presenee and the light of God. I think how you and I, my reader, may perhaps have stood in the chamber of death, and seen in the horizon the summer sun in glory going down. But it is only to us who remain that the evening darkness is growing — only for us that the sun is going down. Look on the sleeping features, and think, ‘Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw herself ; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.’ And then, my reader, tell me — as the evening falls on you, but not on him ; as the shadows deepen on you, but not on him ; as the darkness gathers on you, but not on him — if, in sober reality, the glorious promise has not found its perfect fulfilment, that ‘at the evening time there shall be light !’

Every one knows that Summer Days dispose one to a certain listlessly meditative mood. In cold weather, out of doors at least, you must move about actively ; it is only by the evening fireside, watching the dancing shadows, that you have glimpses of this not wholly unprofitable condition of mind. In summer-time you sometimes feel disposed to stand and look for a good while at the top of a large tree, gently waving about in the blue sky. You begin by thinking it would be curious to be up there : but there is no thought or speculation, moral, political, or religious, which may not come at the end of

the train started by the loftiest branches of the great beech. You are able to sit for a considerable space in front of an ivied wall, and think out your sermon for Sunday as you look at the dark leaves in the sun. Above all, it is soothing and suggestive to look from a height at the soft outline of distant hills of modest elevation; and to see, between yourself and them, many farm-houses and many little cottages dotted here and there. There, under your eye, how much of life, and of the interests of life, is going on! Looking at such things, you muse, in a vague, desultory way. I wonder whether when ordinary folk profess to be thinking, musing, or meditating, they are really thinking connectedly or to any purpose. I daresay the truth is they have (so to speak) given the mind its head; laid the reins of the will on the mind's neck; and are letting it go on and about in a wayward, interrupted, odd, semi-conscious way. They are not holding onward on any track of thought. I believe that common-place human beings can only get their ideas upon any subject into shape and order by writing them down, or (at least) expressing them in words to some one besides themselves. You have a walk of an hour before you: you resolve that you will see your way through some perplexed matter as you walk along; your mind is really running upon it all the way: but when you have got within a hundred yards of your journey's end, you find with a start that you have made no progress at all: you are as far as ever from seeing what to think or do. With most people, to *meditate* means to approach to *doing nothing at all* as closely as in the nature of humanity it is possible to do so. And in this sense of it, summer days, after your work is over, are the time for meditation. So, indeed, are quiet days of autumn: so

the evening generally, when it is not cold. 'Isaac went out to meditate in the field, at the eventide.' Perhaps he thought of the progress of his crops, his flocks, his affairs: perhaps he thought of his expected wife: most probably he thought of nothing in particular; for four thousand years have left human nature in its essence the selfsame thing. It would be miserable work to moon through life, never thinking except in this listless, purposeless way: but after hard work, when you feel the rest has been fairly earned, it is very delightful on such a day and in such a scene as this, to sit down and muse. The analogy which suggests itself to me is that of a carriage-horse, long constrained to keep to the even track along hard dusty roads, drawing a heavy burden; now turned free into a cool green field to wander, and feed, and roll about untrammelled. Even so does the mind, weary of consecutive thinking — of thinking in the track and thinking with a purpose — expatiate in the license of aimless meditation.

There are various questions which may fitly be thought of in the listlessness of this summer day. They are questions the consideration of which does not much excite; questions to which you do not very much mind whether you get an answer or no. I have been thinking for a little while, since I finished the last paragraph, of this point: Whether that clergyman, undertaking the charge of some important church, is best equipped for his duty, who has a great many sermons carefully written and laid up in a box, ready to come out when needed: or that other clergyman, who has very few sermons fully written out, but who has spent great pains in disciplining his mind 'nto that state in which it shall always be able to produce good material. Which of these has made best progress

towards the end of being a good and efficient preacher? Give me, I should say, on the whole, the solid material stock, rather than the trained mind. I look with a curious feeling upon certain very popular preachers, who preach entirely *extempore*: who make a few notes of their skeleton of thought; but trust for the words and even for the illustrations to the inspiration of the moment. They go on boldly: but their path crumbles away behind them as they advance. Their minds are in splendid working order: they turn off admirable work Sunday by Sunday: and while mind and nervous system keep their spring, that admirable work may be counted on almost with certainty. They have Fortunio's purse: they can always put their hand upon the sovereigns they need: but they have no hoard accumulated which they might draw from, should the purse some day fail. And remembering how much the success of the extempore speaker depends upon the mood of the moment: remembering what little things, mental and physical, may mar and warp the intellectual machine for the moment: remembering how entirely successful extempore speaking founds on perfect confidence and presence of mind: remembering how as one grows older the nervous system may get shaken and even broken down: remembering how the train of thought which your mind has produced melts away from you unless you preserve a record of it (for I am persuaded that to many men that which they themselves have written looks before very long as strange and new as that produced by another mind): remembering these things, I say to myself, and to you if you choose to listen: Write sermons diligently: write them week by week, and always do your very best never make up your mind that this one shall be a third-rate affair, just to get the Sunday over; and thus accu-

multate material for use in days when thoughts will not come so readily, and when the hand must write tremblingly and slow. Don't be misled by any clap-trap about the finer thing being to have the mental machine always equal to its task. You cannot have *that*. The mind is a wayward, capricious thing. The engine which did its sixty miles an hour to-day, may be depended on (barring accident) to do as much to-morrow. But it is by no means certain that because you wrote your ten or twenty pages to-day, you will be able to do the like on another day. What educated man does not know, that when he sits down to his desk after breakfast, it is quite uncertain whether he will accomplish an ordinary task, or a double task, or a quadruple one? Dogged determination may make sure, on almost every day, of a decent amount of produced material: but the quality varies vastly, and the quantity which the same degree and continuance of strain will produce is not *à priori* to be calculated. And a spinning-jenny will day by day produce thread of uniform quality: but a very clever man, by very great labour, will on some days write miserable rubbish. And no one will feel *that* more bitterly than himself.

I pass from thinking of these things to a matter somewhat connected with them. Is it because preachers now-a-days shrink from the labour of writing sermons for themselves, or is it because they distrust the quality of what they can themselves produce, that shameless plagiarism is becoming so common? One cannot but reflect, thus lazily inclined upon a summer day, what an amount of painful labour would be saved one if, instead of toiling to see the way through a subject, and then to set out one's views in an interesting and (if possible) an impressive manner, one had simply to go to the volumes of Mr. Mer-

vill or Bishop Wilberforce or Dean Trench ; or, if your taste be of a different order, to those of Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Punshon, or Mr. Stowell Brown — and copy out what you want. The manual labour might be considerable — for one blessing of original composition is, that it makes you insensible to the mere meehanieal labour of writing, — but the intellectual saving would be tremendous. I say nothing of the moral deterioration. I say nothing as to what a mean, contemptible pickpocket, what a jackdaw in peacock's feathers, you will feel yourself. There is no kind of dishonesty which ought to be exposed more unsparingly. Whenever I hear a sermon preached which has been stolen, I shall make a point of informing every one who knows the delinquent. Let him get the credit which is his due. I have not read many published sermons, and I seldom hear any one preach except myself; so that I do not speak from personal knowledge of the fact alleged by many, that there never was a period when this paltry lying and cheating was so prevalent. But five or six times within the last nine years I have listened to sermons in which there was not merely a manifest appropriation of thoughts which the preacher had never digested or made his own, but which were stolen word for word ; and I have been told by friends in whom I have implicit confidence of instances twice five or six. Generally, this dishonesty is practised by frightful blockheads, whose sole object perhaps is to get decently through a task for which they feel themselves unfit ; but it is much more irritating to find men of considerable talent, and of more than considerable popularity, practising it in a very gross degree. And it is curious how such dishonest persons gain in hardihood as they go on. Either because they really escape detection, or because no one tells them

that they have been detected, they come at length to parade themselves in their swindled finery upon the most public occasions. I do believe that, like the liar who has told his story so long that he has come to believe it at last, there are persons who have stolen the thoughts of others so often and so long, that they hardly remember that they are thieves. And in two or three cases in which I put the matter to the proof, by speaking to the thief of the characteristics of the stolen composition, I found him quite prepared to carry out his roguery to the utmost, by talking of the trouble it had cost him to write Dr. Newman's or Mr. Logan's discourse. 'Quite a simple matter — no trouble; scribbled off on Saturday afternoon,' said, in my hearing, a man who had preached an elaborate sermon by an eminent Anglican divine. The reply was irresistible: 'Well, if it cost *you* little trouble, I am sure it cost Mr. Melvill a great deal.'

I am speaking, you remark, of those despicable individuals who falsely pass off as their own composition what they have stolen from some one else. I do not allude to such as follow the advice of Southey, and preach sermons which they honestly declare are not their own. I can see something that might be said in favour of the young inexperienced divine availing himself of the experience of others. Of course, you may take the ground that it is better to give a good sermon by another man than a bad one of your own. Well, then, *say that it is not your own*. Every one knows that when a clergyman goes to the pulpit and gives out his text, and then proceeds with his sermon, the understanding is that he wrote that sermon for himself. If he did not write it, he is bound in common honesty to say so. But besides this, I deny the principle on which some

justify the preaching of another man's sermon. I deny that it is better to give the good sermon of another than the middling one by yourself. Depend upon it, if you have those qualifications of head and heart that fit you for being in the Church at all, your own sermon, however inferior in literary merit, is the better sermon for you to give and for your congregation to hear; it is the better fitted to accomplish the end of all worthy preaching, which, as you know, is not at all to get your hearers to think how clever a man you are. The simple, unambitious instruction into which you have thrown the teachings of your own little experience, and which you give forth from your own heart, will do a hundred times more good than any amount of ingenuity, brilliancy, or even piety, which you may preach at second-hand, with the feeling that somehow you stand to all this as an outsider. If you wish honestly to do good, preach what you have *felt*, and neither less nor more.

But in no way of regarding the ease can any excuse be found for persons who steal and stick into their discourses tawdry little bits of bombast, purple patches of thought or sentiment, which cannot be supposed to do any good to anybody, which stand merely instead of a little stolen gilding for the gingerbread which is probably stolen too. I happened the other day to turn over a volume of discourses (not, I am thankful to say, by a clergyman of either of the national churches), and I came upon a sermon or lecture on *Woman*. You can imagine the kind of thing it was. It was by no means devoid of talent. The writer is plainly a clever, flip-pant person, with little sense, and no taste at all. The discourse sets out with a request that the audience 'would kindly try to keep awake by pinching one another in the

leg, or giving some nodding neighbour a friendly pull of the hair ;' and then there is a good deal about *Woman*, in the style of a Yankee after-dinner speech in proposing such a toast. After a little we have a highly romantic description of a battle-field after the battle, in which gasping steeds, midnight ravens, spectral bats, moping owls, screeching vultures, howling night wolves appear. These animals are suddenly startled by a figure going about with a lantern 'to find the one she loves.' Of course the figure is a woman ; and the paragraph winds up with the following passage : —

Shall we go to her? No! Let her weep on. Leave her, &c. Oh, woman! God beloved in old Jerusalem! We need deal lightly with thy faults, if only for the agony thy nature will endure, in bearing heavy evidence against us on the day of judgment!

Now, my friend, have you read Mr. Dickens' story of *Martin Chuzzlewit*? Turn up the twenty-eighth chapter of that work, and in the closing sentence you may read as follows : —

Oh woman, God-beloved in old Jerusalem! The best among us need deal lightly with thy faults, if only for the punishment thy nature will endure, in bearing heavy evidence against us on the Day of judgment!

I wonder whether the writer of the discourse imagined that by varying one or two words, and adopting small letters instead of capitals in alluding to the Last Day, he made this sentence so entirely his own as to justify him in bagging it without one hint that it was a quotation. As for the value of the property bagged, *that* is another question.

After thinking for a few minutes of the curious constitution of mind which enables a man to feel his vanity

flattered when he gets credit to which he knows he is not entitled, as the plagiarist does, I pass away into the vast field of thought which is afforded by the contemplation of human vanity in general. The Ettrick Shepherd was wont to say that when he tried a new pen, instead of writing his name, as most people do, he always wrote Solomon's famous sentence, *All is vanity*. But he did not understand the words in Solomon's sense: what he thought of was the limitless amount of self-conceit which exists in human beings, and which hardly any degree of mortification can (in many cases) cut down to a reasonable quantity. I find it difficult to arrive at any fixed law in regard to human self-conceit. It would be very pleasant if one could conclude that monstrous vanity is confined to tremendous fools; but although the greatest intellectual self-conceit I have ever seen has been in blockheads of the greatest density and ignorance; and although the greatest self-conceit of personal attractions has been in men and women of unutterable silliness; still, it must be admitted that very great and illustrious members of the human race have been remarkable for their vanity. I have met very clever men, as well as very great fools, who would willingly talk of no other matters than themselves, and their own wonderful doings and attainments. I have known men of real ability, who were always anxious to impress you with the fact that they were the best riders, the best shots, the best jumpers, in the world; who were always telling stories of the sharp things they said on trying occasions, and the extraordinary events which were constantly befalling them. When a clever man evinces this weakness, we must remember that human nature is a weak and imperfect thing, and try to excuse the silliness for the sake of

the real merit. But there are few things more irritating to witness than a stupid, ignorant dunce, wrapped up in impenetrable conceit of his own abilities and acquirements. It requires all the beauty, and all the listlessness too, of this sweet summer day, to think, without the pulse quickening to an indignant speed, of the half-dozen such persons whom each of us has known. It would soothe and comfort us if we could be assured that the blockhead knew that he was a blockhead: if we could be assured that now and then there penetrated into the dense skull and reached the stolid brain, even the suspicion of what his intellectual calibre really is. I greatly fear that such a suspicion never is known. If you witness the perfect confidence with which the man is ready to express his opinion upon any subject, you will be quite sure that the man has not the faintest notion of what his opinion is worth. I remember a blockhead saying that certain lines of poetry were nonsense. He said that they were unintelligible: that they were rubbish. I suggested that it did not follow that they were unintelligible because *he* could not understand them. I told him that various competent judges thought them very noble lines indeed. The blockhead stuck to his opinion with the utmost firmness. What was the use of talking to him? If a blind man tells you he does not see the sun, and does not believe there is any sun, you ought to be sorry for him rather than angry with him. And when the blockhead declared that he saw only rubbish in verses which I trust every reader knows, and which begin with the line —

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,

his declaration merely showed that he lacked the power

to appreciate Mr. Tennyson. But I think, my thoughtful friend, you would have found it hard to pity him when you saw plainly that the poor blockhead despised and pitied you.

The conceit of the stolid dunce is bad, but the conceit of the brisk and lively dunce is worse. The stolid dunce is comparatively quiet; his crass mind works slowly; his vacant face wears an aspect of repose; his talk is merely dull and twaddling. But the talk of the brisk dunce is ambitiously absurd: he lays down broad principles: he announces important discoveries which he has made: he has heard able and thoughtful men talk, and he tries to do that kind of thing. There is an indescribable jauntiness about him apparent in every word and gesture. As for the stolid dunce, you would be content if the usages of society permitted your telling him that he is a dunce. As for the brisk dunce, you would like to take him by the ears and shake him.

It is wonderful how ordinary, sensible persons, with nothing brilliant about them, may live daily in a comfortable feeling that they are great geniuses: if they live constantly amid a little circle of even the most incompetent judges, who are always telling them that they are great geniuses. For it is natural to conclude that the opinion of the people whom you commonly see is a fair reflex of the opinion of all the world; and it is wonderful how highly even a very able man will estimate the value of the opinion of even a very stupid man, provided the stupid man entertains and frequently expresses an immensely high opinion of the very able man. I have known a man, holding a somewhat important position for which he was grossly unfit, and for which every one knew he was grossly unfit; yet perfectly self-satisfied

and comfortable under circumstances which would have crushed many men, because he was kept up by two or three individuals who frequently assured him that he was a very eminent and useful person. These two or three individuals acted as a buffer between him and the estimate of mankind at large. He received their opinion as a fair sample of the general opinion. He was indeed a man of very moderate ability; but I have known another of very great talent, who by the laudations of one or two old women was led to suppose that he possessed abilities of a totally different nature from those which he actually possessed. I do not mean higher abilities, but abilities extending into a field into which his peculiar talents did not reach. Yet no one would have been sharper at discerning the worthlessness of the judgment of the old women had it been other than very flattering to himself. Who is there that does not know that sometimes clever young men are bolstered up into a self-conceit which does them much harm with the outer world, by the violent admiration and flattery of their mothers, sisters, and aunts at home?

But not merely does the favourable estimate of the little circle in which he lives serve to keep a man on good terms with himself; it goes some way towards influencing the estimation in which he is held by mankind at large — so far, that is, as mankind at large know anything about him. I have known such a thing as a family whose several members were always informing everybody they met what noble fellows the other members of the family were. And I am persuaded that all this really had some result. They *were* fine fellows, no doubt; but this tended to make sure that they should not be hid under a bushel. I am persuaded that if half-a-dozen

clever young men were to form themselves into a little association, each member of which should be pledged to lose no opportunity of crying up the other five members in conversation, through the press, and in every other possible way, this would materially further their success in life and the estimation in which they would be held wherever known. The world would take them at the value so constantly dinned into its ear. When you read on a silver coin the legend *one shilling*, you readily take it for a shilling; and if a man walks about with *great genius* painted upon him in large red letters, many people will accept the truth of the inscription. Every one has seen how a knot of able young men hanging together at college and in after life can help one another even in a material sense, and not less valuably by keeping up one another's heart. All this is quite fair, and so is even the mutual praise when it is hearty and sincere. For several months past I have been possessed of an idea which has been gradually growing into shape. I have thought of getting up an association, whose members should always hold by one another, be true to one another, and cry one another up. A friend to whom I mentioned my plan highly approved it, and suggested the happy name of the **MUTUAL EXALTATION SOCIETY**. The association would be limited in number: not more than fifty members could be admitted. It would include educated men in all walks of life; more particularly men whose success in life depends in any measure upon the estimation in which they are commonly held, as barristers, preachers, authors, and the like. Its purposes and operations have already been indicated with as much fulness as would be judicious at the present juncture. Mr. Barnum and Messrs. Moses and Son would be con

sulted on the details. Sir John Ellesmere, ex-solicitor-general and author of the *Essay on the Arts of Self-Advancement*, would be the first president, and the general guide, philosopher, and friend of the Mutual Exaltation Society. The present writer will be secretary. The only remuneration he would expect would be that all the members should undertake, at least six times every day, to make favourable mention of a recently published work. Six times a day would they be expected to say promiscuously to any intelligent friend or stranger, 'Have you read the *Recreations of a Country Parson*? Most wonderful book! Not read it? Go to Mudie's and get it directly' — and the like. For obvious reasons it would not do to make public the names of the members of the association; the moral weight of their mutual laudation would be much diminished. But clever young men in various parts of the country who may desire to join the society, may make application to the Editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, enclosing testimonials of moral and intellectual character. Applications will be received until the First of April, 1861.

I wonder whether any real impression is produced by those puffing paragraphs which appear in country newspapers about some men, and which are written either by the men themselves or by their near relatives and friends. I think no impression is ever produced upon intelligent people, and no permanent impression upon any one. Still, among a rural population, there may be found those who believe all that is printed in a newspaper; and who think that the man who is mentioned in a newspaper is a very great man. And if you live among such, it is pleasant to be regarded by them as

a hero. The Reverend Mr. Smith receives from his parishioners the gift of a silver salver: the county paper of the following Friday contains a lengthy paragraph recording the fact, and giving the reverend gentleman's feeling and appropriate reply. The same worthy clergyman preaches a charity sermon: and the circumstances is recorded very fully, the eloquent peroration being given with an accuracy which says much for the perfection of provincial reporting — given, indeed, word for word. Now it is natural to think that Mr. Smith is a much more eminent man than those other men whose salvers and charity sermons find no place in the newspaper: and Mr. Smith's agricultural parishioners no doubt think so. A different opinion is entertained by such as know that Mr. Smith's uncle is a large proprietor in the puffing newspaper; and that he wrote the articles in question in a much warmer strain than that in which they appeared, the editor having sadly curtailed and toned them down. In the long run, all this quackery does no good. And indeed long accounts in provincial journals of family matters, weddings and the like, serve only to make the family in question laughed at. Still, they do harm to nobody. They are very innocent. They please the family whose proceedings are chronicled; and if the family are laughed at, why, they don't know it.

And, happily, that which we do not know does us no harm: at least, gives us no pain. And it is a law, a kindly and a reasonable law, of civilized life, that when it is not absolutely necessary that a man should know that which would give him pain, he shall not be told of it. Only the most malicious violate this law. Even they cannot do it long: for they come to be excluded

from society as its common enemies. One great characteristic of educated society is this: it is always under a certain degree of *Restraint*. Nobody, in public, speaks out all his mind. Nobody tells the whole truth, at least, in public speeches and writings. It is a terrible thing when an inexperienced man in Parliament (for instance) blurts out the awkward fact which everybody knows, but of which nobody is to speak except in the confidence of friendship or private society. How such a man is hounded down! He is every one's enemy. Every one is afraid of him. No one knows what he may say next. And it is quite fit that he should be stopped. Civilized life could not otherwise go on. It is quite right (when you calmly reflect upon it) that the county paper, speaking of the member of Parliament, should tell us how this much-respected gentleman has been visiting his constituents, but should suppress a good deal of the speech he made, which the editor (though of the same politics) tells you frankly was worthy only of an escaped lunatic. Above all, it is fit and decent that the very odd private life and character of the legislator should be by tacit consent ignored even by the journals most opposed to him. It is right that kings and nobles should be, for the most part, spoken of in public as if they actually were what they ought to be. It is something of a reminder and a rebuke to them: and it is just as well that mankind at large should not know too much of the actual fact as to those above them. I should never object to calling a graceless duke *Your Grace*: nor to praying for a villainously bad monarch as *our most religious and gracious King* (I know quite well, small critic, that *religious* is an absurd mistranslation: but let us take the liturgy in the sense in which ninety-nine out of every hundred who

hear it understand it) : for it seems to me that the daily recurring phrases are something ever suggesting what mankind have a right to expect from those in eminent station ; and a kindly determination to believe that such are at least endeavoring to be what they ought. No doubt there is often most bitter rebuke in the names ! This law of Restraint extends to all the doings of civilized men. No one does anything to the very utmost of his ability. No one speaks the entire truth, unless in confidence. No one exerts his whole bodily strength. No one ever spoke at the very top of his voice, unless in mortal extremity. Unquestionably, the feeling that you must work within limits curtails the result accomplished. You may see this in cases in which the restraint of the civilized man binds him no longer. A man delirious or mad needs four men to hold him : there is no restraint keeping in his exertions ; and you see what physical energy can do when utterly unlimited. And a man who always spoke out in public the entire truth about all men and all things, would inspire I know not what of terror. He would be like a mad Malay running a muck, dagger in hand. If the person who in a deliberative assembly speaks of another person as his *venerable friend*, were to speak of him there as he did half an hour before in private, as an *obstructive old idiot*, how people would start ! It would be like the bare bones of the skeleton showing through the fair covering of flesh and blood.

The shadows are lengthening eastward now ; the summer day will soon be gone. And looking about on this beautiful world, I think of a poem by Bryant, in which he tells us how, gazing on the sky and the mountains in June.

he wished that when his time should come, the green turf of summer might be broken to make his grave. He could not bear, he tells us, the idea of being borne to his resting-place through sleety winds, and covered with icy clods. Of course, poets give us fanciful views, gained by looking at one side of a picture : and De Quincey somewhere states the opposite opinion, that death seems sadder in summer, because there is a feeling that in quitting this world our friend is losing more. It will not matter much, friendly reader, to you and me, what kind of weather there may be on the day of our respective funerals ; though one would wish for a pleasant, sunshiny time. And let us humbly trust that when we go, we may find admission to a Place so beautiful, that we shall not miss the green fields and trees, the roses and honeysuckle of June. You may think, perhaps, of another reason besides Bryant's, for preferring to die in the summer time ; you remember the quaint old Scotch lady, dying on a night of rain and hurricane, who said (in entire simplicity and with nothing of irreverence) to the circle of relations round her bed, ' Eh, what a fearfu' nicht for me to be fleein' through the air ! ' And perhaps it is natural to think it would be pleasant for the parted spirit, passing away from human ken and comfort, to mount upwards, angel-guided, through the soft sunset air of June, towards the country where suns never set, and where all the days are summer days. But all this is no better than a wayward fancy ; it founds on forgetfulness of the nature of the immaterial soul, to think that there need be any lengthened journey, or any flight through skies either stormy or calm. You have not had the advantage, I dare say, of being taught in your childhood the catechism which is drilled into all children in Scotland ; and which sketches

out with admirable clearness and precision the elements of Christian belief. If you had, you would have been taught to repeat words which put away all uncertainty as to the intermediate state of departed spirits. 'The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do IMMEDIATELY pass into glory.' Yes; IMMEDIATELY; there is to the departed spirit no middle space at all between earth and heaven. The old lady need not have looked with any apprehension to going out from the warm chamber into the stormy winter night, and flying far away. Not but that millions of miles may intervene; not but that the two worlds may be parted by a still, breathless ocean, a fathomless abyss of cold dead space; yet, swift as never light went, swift as never thought went, flies the just man's spirit across the profound. One moment the sick-room, the scaffold, the stake; the next, the paradisaical glory. One moment the sob of parting anguish; the next the great deep swell of the angel's song. Never think, reader, that the dear ones you have seen die, had far to go to meet God after they parted from you. Never think, parents who have seen your children die, that after they left you, they had to traverse a dark solitary way, along which you would have liked (if it had been possible) to lead them by the hand, and bear them company till they came into the presence of God. *You did so*, if you stood by them till the last breath was drawn. *You did* bear them company into God's very presence, if you only stayed beside them till they died. The moment they left you, they were with him. The slight pressure of the cold fingers lingered with you yet; but the little child was with his Saviour.



CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING SCREWS:

BEING THOUGHTS ON THE PRACTICAL SERVICE OF
IMPERFECT MEANS.,

A CONSOLATORY ESSAY.



ALMOST every man is what, if he were a horse, would be called a screw. Almost every man is unsound. Indeed, my reader, I might well say even more than this. It would be no more than truth, to say that there does not breathe any human being who could satisfactorily pass a thorough examination of his physical and moral nature by a competent inspector.

I do not here enter on the etymological question, why an unsound horse is called a screw. Let that be discussed by abler hands. Possibly the phrase set out at length originally ran, that an unsound horse was an animal in whose constitution there was a screw loose. And the jarring effect produced upon any machine by looseness on the part of a screw which ought to be tight, is well known to thoughtful and experienced minds. By a process of gradual abbreviation, the phrase indicated passed into the simpler statement, that the unsound steed was himself a screw. By a bold transition, by a subtle intellectual process, the thing supposed to be

wrong in the animal's physical system was taken to mean the animal in whose physical system the thing was wrong. Or, it is conceivable that the use of the word *screw* implied that the animal, possibly in early youth, had got some unlucky twist or wrench, which permanently damaged its bodily nature, or warped its moral development. A tendon perhaps received a tug which it never quite got over. A joint was suddenly turned in a direction in which Nature had not contemplated its ever turning: and the joint never played quite smoothly and sweetly again. In this sense, we should discern in the use of the word *screw*, something analogous to the expressive Scotticism, which says of a perverse and impracticable man, that he is a *thrown* person; that is, a person who has got a *thraw* or twist; or rather, a person the machinery of whose mind works as machinery might be conceived to work which had got a *thraw* or twist. The reflective reader will easily discern that a complex piece of machinery, by receiving an unlucky twist, even a slight twist, would be put into a state in which it would not go sweetly, or would not go at all.

After this *excursus*, which I regard as not unworthy the attention of the eminent Dean of Westminster, who has for long been, through his admirable works, my guide and philosopher in all matters relating to the *study of words*, I recur to the grand principle laid down at the beginning of the present dissertation, and say deliberately, that ALMOST EVERY MAN THAT LIVES, IS WHAT, IF HE WERE A HORSE, WOULD BE CALLED A SCREW. Almost every man is unsound. Every man (to use the language of a veterinary surgeon) has in him the seeds of unsoundness. You could not honestly give a warranty with almost any mortal. Alas! my brother:

in the highest and most solemn of all respects, if *soundness* ascribed to a creature implies that it is what it ought to be, who shall venture to warrant any man sound!

I do not mean to make my readers uncomfortable, by suggesting that every man is physically unsound: I speak of intellectual and moral unsoundness. You know, the most important thing about a horse is his body; and accordingly when we speak of a horse's soundness or unsoundness, we speak physically; we speak of his body. But the most important thing about a man is his mind; and so, when we say a man is sound or unsound, we are thinking of mental soundness or unsoundness. In short, the man is mainly a soul; the horse is mainly and essentially a body. And though the moral qualities even of a horse are of great importance, — such qualities as vice (which in a horse means malignity of temper), obstinacy, nervous shyness (which carried out into its practical result becomes *shying*); still the name of screw is chiefly suggestive of physical defects. Its main reference is to wind and limb. The soundness of a horse is to the philosophic and stable mind suggestive of good legs, shoulders, and hoofs; of uncongested lungs and free air-passages; of efficient eyes and entire freedom from staggers. It is the existence of something wrong in these matters which constitutes the unsound horse, or screw.

But though the great thing about rational and immortal man is the soul: and though accordingly the most important soundness or unsoundness about *him* is that which has its seat *THERE*; still, let it be said that even as regards physical soundness there are few men whom a veterinary surgeon would pass, if they were horses. Most

educated men are physically in very poor condition. And particularly the cleverest of our race, in whom intellect is most developed and cultivated, are for the most part in a very unsatisfactory state as regards bodily soundness. They rub on: they manage somehow to get through their work in life; but they never feel brisk or buoyant. They never know high health, with its attendant cheerfulness. It is a rare case to find such a combination of muscle and intellect as existed in Christopher North: the commoner type is the shambling Wordsworth, whom even his partial sister thought so mean-looking when she saw him walking with a handsome man. Let it be repeated, most civilized men are physically unsound. For one thing, most educated men are broken-winded. They could not trot a quarter of a mile without great distress. I have been amused, when in church I have heard a man beyond middle age singing very loud, and plainly proud of his volume of voice, to see how the last note of the line was cut short for want of wind. I say nothing of such grave signs of physical unsoundness as little pangs shooting about the heart, and little dizzinesses of the brain; these matters are too serious for this page. But it is certain that educated men, for the most part, have great portions of their muscular system hardly at all developed, through want of exercise. The legs of even hard brain-workers are generally exercised a good deal; for the constitutional exercise of such is usually walking. But in large town such men give fair play to no other thews and sinews. More especially the arms of such men are very flabby. The muscle is soft, and slender. If the fore legs of a horse were like that, you could not ride him but at the risk of your neck.

Still, the great thing about man is the mind ; and when I set out by declaring that almost every man is unsound, I was thinking of mental unsoundness. Most minds are unsound. No horse is accepted as sound in which the practised eye of the veterinarian can find some physical defect, something away from normal development and action. And if the same rule be applied to us, my readers ; if every man is mentally a screw, in whose intellectual and moral development a sharp eye can detect something not right in the play of the machinery or the formation of it ; then I fancy that we may safely lay it down as an axiom, that there is not upon the face of the earth a perfectly sane man. A sane mind means a healthy mind ; that is, a mind that is exactly what it ought to be. Where shall we discover such a one ? My reader, you have not got it. I have not got it. Nobody has got it. No doubt, at the first glance, this seems startling ; but I intend this essay to be a consolatory one, and I wish to show you that in this world it is well if means will fairly and decently suffice for their ends, even though they be very far from being all that we could wish. God intends not that this world should go on upon a system of optimism. It is enough, if things are so, that they *will do*. They might do far better. And let us remember, that though a veterinary surgeon would tell you that there is hardly such a thing as a perfectly sound horse in Britain, still in Britain there is very much work done, and well done, by horses. Even so, much work, fair work, passable work, noble work, magnificent work, may be turned off, and day by day is turned off, by minds which, in strict severity, are no better than good, workable, or showy screws.

Many minds, otherwise good and even noble, are un-

sound upon the point of Vanity. Nor is the unsoundness one that requires any very sharp observer to detect. It is very often extremely conspicuous; and the merest block-head can discern, and can laugh at, the unfortunate defect in one who is perhaps a great and excellent man. Many minds are off the balance in the respect of Suspiciousness; many in that of absurd Prejudice. Many are unsound in the matters of Silliness, Pettiness, Pettedness, Perversity, or general Unpleasantness and *Thrawn-ness*. Multitudes of men are what in Scotland is called *Cat-witted*. I do not know whether the word is intelligible in England. It implies a combination of littleness of nature, small self-conceit, readiness to take offence, determination in little things to have one's own way, and general impracticability. There are men to whom even the members of their own families do not like to talk about their plans and views: who will suddenly go off on a long journey without telling any one in the house till the minute before they go; and concerning whom their nearest relatives think it right to give you a hint that they are rather peculiar in temper, and you must mind how you talk to them. There are human beings whom to manage into doing the simplest and most obvious duty, needs, on your part, the tact of a diplomatist combined with the skill of a driver of refractory pigs. In short, there are in human beings all kinds of mental twists and deformities. There are mental lameness and broken-windedness. Mental and moral shying is extremely common. As for biting, who does not know it? We have all seen human biters; not merely backbiters, but creatures who like to leave the marks of their teeth upon people present too. There are many kickers; men who in running with others do (so to speak) kick over the traces, and viciously lash out at

their companions with little or no provocation. There are men who are always getting into quarrels, though in the main warm-hearted and well-meaning. There are human jibbers: creatures that lie down in the shafts instead of manfully (or horsefully) putting their neck to the collar, and going stoutly at the work of life. There are multitudes of people who are constantly suffering from depression of spirits, a malady which appears in countless forms. There is not a human being in whose mental constitution there is not something wrong; some weakness, some perversion, some positive vice. And if you want further proof of the truth of what I am saying, given by one whose testimony is worth much more than mine, go and read that eloquent and kindly and painfully fascinating book lately published by Dr. Forbes Winslow, on *Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind*; and you will leave off with the firmest conviction that every breathing mortal is mentally a screw.

And yet, my reader, if you have some knowledge of horse-flesh, and if you have been accustomed in your progress through life (in the words of Dr. Johnson) to practise observation, and to look about you with extensive view, your survey must have convinced you that great part of the coaching and other horse work of this country is done, and fairly done, by screws. These poor creatures are out in all kinds of weather, and it seems to do them little harm. Any one who knows how snug, dry, and warm a gentleman's horses are kept, and how often with all that they are unfit for their duty, will wonder to see poor cab horses shivering on the stand hour after hour on a winter day, and will feel something of respect mingle with his pity for the thin, patient, serviceable screws. Horses that are lame, broken-winded, and

vicious, pull the great bulk of all the weight that horses pull. And they get through their work somehow. Not long since, sitting on the box of a highland coach of most extraordinary shape, I travelled through Glenorchy and along Loch Awe side. The horses were wretched to look at, yet they took the coach at a good pace over that very up and down road, which was divided into very long stages. At last, amid a thick wood of dwarf oaks, the coach stopped to receive its final team. It was an extraordinary place for a coach to change horses. There was not a house near: the horses had walked three miles from their stable. They were by far the best team that had drawn the coach that day. Four tall greys, nearly white with age; but they looked well and went well, checking the coach stoutly as they went down the precipitous descents, and ascending the opposite hills at a tearing gallop. No doubt you could see various things amiss. They were blowing a little; one or two were rather blind; and all four a little stiff at starting. They were all screws. The dearest of them had not cost the coach proprietor seven pounds; yet how well they went over the eleven-mile stage into Inverary!

Now in like manner, a great part of the mental work that is done, is done by men who mentally are screws. The practical every-day work of life is done, and respectably done, by very silly, weak, prejudiced people. Mr. Carlyle has stated, that the population of Britain consists of 'seventeen millions of people, mostly fools.' I shall endeavour by and bye to make some reservation upon the great author's sweeping statement; but here it is enough to remark that even Mr. Carlyle would admit that the very great majority of these seventeen millions get very decently and creditably through the task which God

sets them in this world. Let it be admitted that they are not so wise as they should be; yet surely it may be admitted too, that they possess that in heart and head which makes them good enough for the rough and homely wear of life. No doubt they blow and occasionally stumble, they sometimes even bite and kick a little; yet somehow they get the coach along. For it is to be remembered that the essential characteristic of a screw is, that though unsound, it can yet by management be got to go through a great deal of work. The screw is not dead lame, nor only fit for the knacker; it falls far short of the perfection of a horse, but still it *is* a horse, after all, and it can fulfil in some measure a horse's duty. You see, my friend, the moderation of my view. I do not say that men in general are mad, but only that men in general are screws. There is a little twist in their intellectual or moral nature; there is something wanting or something wrong; they are silly, conceited, egotistical, and the like; yet decently equal to the work of this world. By judicious management you may get a great deal of worthy work out of the unsound minds of other men; and out of your own unsound mind. But always remember that you have an imperfect and warped machine to get on with; do not expect too much of it; and be ready to humour it and yield to it a little. Just as a horse which is lame and broken-winded can yet by care and skill be made to get creditably through a wonderful amount of labour; so may a man, low-spirited, foolish, prejudiced, ill-tempered, soured, and wretched, be enabled to turn off a great deal of work for which the world may be the better. A human being who is really very weak and silly, may write many pages which shall do good to his fellow men, or which shall at the least amuse them.

But as you carefully drive an unsound horse, walking him at first starting, not trotting him down hill, making play at parts of the road which suit him ; so you must manage many men, or they will break down or bolt out of the path. Above all, so you must manage your own mind, whose weaknesses and wrong impulses you know best, if you would keep it cheerful, and keep it in working order. The showy, unsound horse can go well perhaps, but it must be shod with leather, otherwise it would be dead-lame in a mile. And just in that same fashion we human beings, all more or less of screws mentally and morally, need all kinds of management, on the part of our friends and on our own part, or we should go all wrong. There is something truly fearful when we find that clearest-headed and soberest-hearted of men, the great Bishop Butler, telling us that all his life long he was struggling with horrible morbid suggestions, *devilish* is what he calls them, which, but for being constantly held in check with the sternest effort of his nature, would have driven him mad. Oh, let the uncertain, unsound, unfathomable human heart be wisely and tenderly driven ! And as there are things which with the unsound horse you dare not venture on at all, so with the fallen mind. You who know your own horse, know that you dare not trot him hard down hill. And you who know your own mind and heart, know that there are some things of which you dare not think ; thoughts on which your only safety is resolutely to turn your back. The management needful *here* is the management of utter avoidance. How often we find poor creatures who have passed through years of anxiety and misery, and experienced savage and deliberate cruelty which it is best to forget, lashing themselves up to wrath and bitterness by brooding over these

things, on which wisdom would bid them try to close their eyes for ever!

But not merely do screws daily draw cabs and stage-coaches: screws have won the Derby and the St. Leger. A noble-looking thorough-bred has galloped by the winning-post at Epsom at the rate of forty miles an hour, with a white bandage tightly tied round one of its fore-legs: and thus publicly confessing its unsoundness, and testifying to its trainer's fears, it has beaten a score of steeds which were not screws, and borne off from them the blue ribbon of the turf. Yes, my reader: not only will skilful management succeed in making unsound animals do decently the hum-drum and prosaic task-work of the equine world; it will succeed occasionally in making unsound animals do in magnificent style the grandest things that horses ever do at all. Don't you see the analogy I mean to trace? Even so, not merely do Mr. Carlyle's seventeen millions of fools get somehow through the petty work of our modern life, but minds which no man could warrant sound and free from vice, turn off some of the noblest work that ever was done by mortal. Many of the grandest things ever done by human minds, have been done by minds that were incurable screws. Think of the magnificent service done to humankind by James Watt. It is positively impossible to calculate what we all owe to the man that gave us the steam-engine. It is sober truth that the inscription in Westminster Abbey tells, when it speaks of him as among the 'best benefactors' of the race. Yet what an unsound organization that great man had! Mentally, what a screw! Through most of his life he suffered the deepest misery from desperate depression of spirits; he was always fancying that his mind was breaking down.

he has himself recorded that he often thought of casting off, by suicide, the unendurable burden of life. And still, what work the rickety machine got through! With tearing headaches, with a sunken chest, with the least muscular of limbs, with the most melancholy of temperaments, worried and tormented by piracies of his great inventions, yet doing so much and doing it so nobly, was not James Watt like the lame race-horse that won the Derby? As for Byron, he was unquestionably a very great man; and as a poet, he is in his own school without a rival. Still, he was a screw. There was something morbid and unsound about his entire development. In many respects he was extremely silly. It was extremely silly to take pains to represent that he was morally much worse than he really was. The greatest blockheads I know are distinguished by the same characteristic. Oh, empty-headed Noodle! who have more than once dropped hints in my presence as to the awful badness of your life, and the unhappy insight which your life has given you into the moral rottenness of society, don't do it again. I always thought you a contemptible fool: but next time I mean to tell you so. Wordsworth was a screw. Though one of the greatest of poets, he was dreadfully twisted by inordinate egotism and vanity: the result partly of original constitution, and partly of living a great deal too much alone in that damp and misty lake country. He was like a spavined horse. Coleridge, again, was a jibber. He never would pull in the team of life. There is something unsound in the mind of the man who fancies that because he is a genius, he need not support his wife and children. Even the sensible and exemplary Southey was a little unsound in the matter of a crotchety temper, needlessly ready to

take offence. He was always quarrelling with his associates in the *Quarterly Review*: with the editor and the publisher. Perhaps you remember how on one occasion he wrought himself up into a fever of wrath with Mr. Murray, because that gentleman suggested a subject on which he wished Southey to write for the *Quarterly*, and begged him to *put his whole strength to it*, the subject being one which was just then of great interest and importance. 'Flagrant insolence,' exclaimed Southey. 'Think of the fellow bidding me put my whole strength to an article in his six-shilling *Review*!' Now, reader, *there* you see the evil consequence of a man who is a little of a screw in point of temper, living in the country. Most reasonable men would never have discerned any insult in Mr. Murray's request: but even if such a one had thought it a shade too authoritatively expressed, he would, if he had lived in town, gone out to the crowded street, gone down to his club, and in half an hour have entirely forgotten the little disagreeable impression. But a touchy man, dwelling in the country, gets the irritative letter by the morning's post, is worried by it all the forenoon, and goes out and broods on the offence through all his solitary afternoon walk, — a walk in which he does not see a face, perhaps, and certainly does not exchange a sentence with any human being whose presence is energetic enough to turn the current of thought into a healthier direction. And so, by the evening he has got the little offence into the point of view in which it looks most offensive: he is in a rage at being asked to do his best in writing anything for a six-shilling publication. Why on earth not do so? Is not the mind unsoundly sensitive that finds an offence in a request like that? My brilliant brethren who write for

Fraser, don't you put your whole strength to articles to be published in a periodical that sells for half-a-crown?

You could not have warranted manly Samuel Johnson sound, on the points of prejudice and bigotry. There was something unsound in that unreasoning hatred of everything Scotch. Rousseau was altogether a screw. He was mentally lame, broken-winded, a shy, a kicker, a jibber, a biter: he would do anything but run right on and do his duty. Shelley was a notorious screw. I should say, indeed, that his unsoundness passed the limit of practical sanity, and that on certain points he was unquestionably mad. You could not have warranted Keats sound. You could not deny the presence of a little perverse twist even in the noble mind and heart of the great Sir Charles Napier. The great Emperor Napoleon was cracky, if not cracked, on various points. There was unsoundness in his strange belief in his Fate. Neither Bacon nor Newton was entirely sound. But the mention of Newton suggests to me the single specimen of human kind who might stand even before *him*: and reminds me that Shakspeare was as sound as any mortal can be. Any defect in him extends no farther than to his taste: and possibly where we should differ from him, he is right and we are wrong. You could not say that Shakspeare was mentally a screw. The noblest of all genius is sober and reasonable: it is among geniuses of the second order that you find something so warped, so eccentric, so abnormal, as to come up to our idea of a screw. Sir Walter Scott was sound: save perhaps in the matter of his veneration for George IV., and of his desire to take rank as one of the country gentlemen of Roxburghshire.

To sum up: let it be admitted that very noble work

has been turned off by minds in so far unhinged. It is not merely that great wits are to madness near allied, it is that great wits are sometimes actually in part mad. Madness is a matter of degree. The slightest departure from the normal and healthy action of the mind is an approximation to it. Every mind is a little unsound; but you don't talk of insanity till the unsoundness becomes very glaring, and unfits for the duty of life. Just as almost every horse is a little lame: one leg steps a hairbreadth shorter than the other, or is a thought less muscular, or the hoof is a shade too sensitive; but you don't talk of lameness till the creature's head begins to go up and down, or till it plainly shrinks from putting its foot to the ground. Southey's wrath about the six-shilling *Review*, and his brooding on Murray's slight offence, was a step in the direction of marked delusion such as conveys a man to Hanwell or Morningside. And the sensitive, imaginative nature, which goes to the production of some of the human mind's best productions, is prone to such little deviations from that which is strictly sensible and right. You do not think, gay young readers, what poor unhappy half-cracked creatures may have written the pages which thrill you or amuse you; or painted the picture before which you pause so long. I know hardly any person who ever published anything; but I have sometimes thought that I should like to see assembled in one chamber, on the first of any month, all the men and women who wrote all the articles in all the magazines for that month. Some of them doubtless would be very much like other people; but many would certainly be very odd-looking and odd-tempered samples of humankind. The history of some would be commonplace enough, but that of many would be very curious. A

great many readers, I dare say, would like to stand in a gallery, and look at the queer individuals assembled below. Magazine articles, of course, are not (speaking generally) specimens of the highest order of literature but still, some experience, some thought, some observation, have gone to produce even them. And it is unquestionably out of deep sorrow, out of the travail of heart and nature, that the finest and noblest of all human thoughts have come.

As for the ordinary task-work of life, it must, beyond all question, be generally done by screws, — that is, by folk whose mental organization is unsound on some point. Vain people, obstinate people, silly people, evil-foreboding people, touchy people, twaddling people, carry on the work-day world. Not that it would be giving a fair account of them to describe them thus, and leave the impression that such are their essential characteristics. They *are* all that has been said ; but there is in most a good substratum of practical sense ; and they do fairly, or even remarkably well, the particular thing which it is their business in this life to do. When Mr. Carlyle said that the population of Britain consists of so many millions, ‘mostly fools,’ he conveys a quite wrong impression. No doubt there are some who are silly out and out, who are always fools, and essentially fools. No doubt almost all, if you questioned them on great matters of which they have hardly thought, would express very foolish and absurd opinions. But then these absurd opinions are not the staple production of their minds. These are not a fair sample of their ordinary thoughts. Their ordinary thoughts are, in the main, sensible and reasonable, no doubt. Once upon a time, while a famous criminal trial was exciting vast interest, I heard a man in a rail-

way-carriage, with looks of vast slyness and of special stores of information, tell several others that the judge and the counsel on each side had met quietly the evening before to arrange what the verdict should be; and that though the trial would go on to its end to delude the public, still the whole thing was already settled. Now, my first impulse was to regard the man with no small interest, and to say to myself, There, unquestionably, is a fool. But, on reflection, I felt I was wrong. No doubt he talked like a fool on this point. No doubt he expressed himself in terms worthy of an asylum for idiots. But the man may have been a very shrewd and sensible man in matters with which he was accustomed to deal: he was a horse-dealer, I believe, and I doubt not sharp enough at market; and the idiotic appearance he made was the result of his applying his understanding to a matter quite beyond his experience and out of his province. But a man is not properly to be called a fool, even though occasionally he says and does very foolish things, if the great preponderance of the things he says and does be reasonable. No doubt Mr. Carlyle is right in so far as this: that in almost every man there is an element of the fool. Almost all have a vein of folly running through them, and cropping out at the surface now and then. But in most men *that* is not the characteristic part of their nature. There is more of the sensible man than of the fool.

For the forms of unsoundness in those who are mental screws of the commonplace order; they are endless. You sometimes meet an intellectual defect like that of the conscientious blockhead James II., who thought that to differ from him in opinion was to doubt his word and call him a liar. An unsoundness common to all unedu-

cated people is, that they cannot argue any question without getting into a rage and roaring at the top of their voice. This unsoundness exists in a good many educated men too. A peculiar twist of some minds is this — that instead of maintaining by argument the thesis they are maintaining, which is probably that two and two make five, they branch off and begin to adduce arguments which do not go to prove *that*, but to prove that the man who maintains that two and two make four is a fool, or even a ruffian. Some good men are subject to this infirmity — that if you differ from them on any point whatever, they regard the fact of your differing from them as proof, not merely that you are intellectually stupid, but that you are morally depraved. Some really good men and women cannot let slip an opportunity of saying anything that may be disagreeable. And this is an evil that tends to perpetuate itself; for when Mr. Snarling comes and says to you something uncomplimentary of yourself or your near relations, instead of your doing what you ought to do, and pitying poor Snarling, and recommending him some wholesome medicine, you are strongly tempted to retort in kind: and thus you sink yourself to Snarling's level, and you carry on the row. Your proper course is either to speak kindly to poor Snarling, or not to speak to him at all. There is something unsound about the man whom you never heard say a good word of any mortal, but whom you have heard say a great many bad words of a great many mortals. There is unsoundness verging on entire insanity in the man who is always fancying that all about him are constantly plotting to thwart his plans and damage his character. There is unsoundness in the man who is constantly getting into furious altercations with his fellow passengers in steamers and rail-

ways, or getting into angry and lengthy correspondence with anybody in the newspapers or otherwise. There is unsoundness in the man who is ever telling you amazing stories which he fancies prove himself to be the bravest, cleverest, swiftest of mankind, but which (on his own showing) prove him to be a vapouring goose. There is unsoundness in the man or woman who turns green with envy as a handsome carriage drives past, and then says with awful bitterness that he or she would not enter such a shabby old conveyance. There is unsoundness in the mortal whose memory is full to repletion of contemptible little stories going to prove that all his neighbours are rogues or fools. There is unsoundness in the unfortunate persons who are always bursting into tears and bawling out that nobody loves them. Nobody will, so long as they bawoo. Let them stop bawooing. There is unsoundness in the mental organization of the sneaky person who stays a few weeks in a family, and sets each member of it against all the rest by secretly repeating to each exaggerated and malicious accounts of what has been said as to him or her by the others. There is unsoundness in the perverse person who resolutely does the opposite of what you wish and expect: who won't go the pleasure excursion you had arranged on his account, or partake of the dish which has been cooked for his special eating. There is unsoundness in the deluded and unamiable person who, by a grim, repellent, Pharisaic demeanour and address excites in the minds of young persons gloomy and repulsive ideas of religion, which wiser and better folk find it very hard to rub away. 'Will my father be there?' said a little Scotch boy to some one who had been telling him of the Happiest Place in the universe, and recounting its joys. 'Yes, was the reply. Said the little man, with

prompt decision, 'Then I'll no gang!' He must have been a wretched screw of a Christian who left that impression on a young ehild's heart. There is unsoundness in the man who cannot listen to the praises of another man's merit without feeling as though this were something taken from himself. And it is amusing, though sad, to see how such folk take for granted in others the same petty enviousness which they feel in themselves. They will go to one writer, painter, preacher, and begin warmly to praise the doings of another man in the same vocation; and when I have seen the man addressed listen to and add to the praises with the hearty, self-forgetting sineerity of a generous mind, I have witnessed the bitter disappointment of the petty malignants at the failure of their poisoned dart. Generous honesty quite baffles such. If their dart ever wounds you, reader, it is because you deserve that it should. There is unsoundness in the kindly, loveable man, whose opinions are preposterous, and whose conversation that of a jackass. But still, who can help loving the man, occasionally to be met, whose heart is right and whose talk is twaddle? Let me add, that I have met with one or two cases in which conscience was quite paralysed, but all the other intellectual faculties were right. Surely there is no more deplorable instance of the mental screw. You may find the notorious cheat who is never out of church, and who faneies himself a most ereditable man. You will find the malicious tale-bearer and liar, who attends all the prayer-meetings within her reach, and who thanks God (like an individual in former days) that she is so much better than other women.

In the ease of commonplace screws, if they do their work well, it is for the most part in spite of their being

screws. It is because they are sound in the main, in those portions of their mental constitution which their daily work calls into play; and because they are seldom required to do those things which their unsoundness makes them unfit to do. You know, if a horse never fell lame except when smartly trotted down a hill four miles long, you might say that for practical purposes *that* horse was never lame at all. For the single contingency to which its powers are unequal would hardly ever occur. In like manner, if the mind of a tradesman is quite equal to the management of his business and the respectable training of his family, you may say that the tradesman's mind is for practical purposes a sound and good one; although if called to consider some important political question, such as that of the connexion of Church and State, his judgment might be purely idiotical. You see, he is hardly ever required to put his mind (so to speak) at a hill at which it would break down. I have walked a mile along the road with a respectable Scotch farmer, talking of country matters; and I have concluded that I had hardly ever conversed with a shrewder and more sensible man. But having accidentally chanced to speak of a certain complicated political question, I found that *quoad hoc* my friend's intellect was that of a baby. I had just come upon the four-mile descent which would knock up the horse which for ordinary work was sound.

Yes, reader, in the case of commonplace screws, if they do their work well, it is *in spite of* their being screws. But in the case of great geniuses who are screws, it is often *because of* their unsoundness that they do the fine things they do. It is the hectic beauty which his morbid mind cast upon his page, that made Byron the attractive and fascinating poet that he is to young

and inexperienced minds. Had his views been sounder and his feeling healthier, he might have been but a commonplace writer after all. In poetry, and in all imaginative writing, we look for beauty, not for sense; and we all know that what is properly disease and unsoundness sometimes adds to beauty. You know the delicate flush, the bright eyes, the long eyelashes, which we often see in a young girl on whom consumption is doing its work. You know the peachy complexion which often goes with undeveloped scrofula. And had Charles Lamb not been trembling on the verge of insanity, the *Essays of Elia* would have wanted great part of their strange, undefinable charm. Had Ford and Massinger led more regular lives and written more reasonable sentiments, what a *caput mortuum* their tragedies would be! Had Coleridge been a man of homely common-sense, he would never have written *Christabel*. I remember in my boyhood reading *The Ancient Mariner* to a hard-headed lawyer of no literary taste. He listened to the poem, and merely remarked that its author was a horrible fool.

There is no doubt that physical unsoundness often is a cause of mental excellence. Some of the best women on earth are the ugliest. Their ugliness cut them off from the enjoyment of the gaieties of life; they did not care to go to a ball-room and sit all the evening without once being asked to dance; and so they learned to devote themselves to better things. You have seen the pretty sister, a frivolous, silly flirt; the homely sister, quietly devoting herself to works of Christian charity. Ugly people, we often hear it said, cry up the beauties of the mind. It may be added, that ugly people possess a very large proportion of those beauties. And a great deal of the best intellectual work is done by men who are physi-

ally screws; by men who are nearly blind, broken-winded, lame, and weakly. We all know what the Apostle Paul was physically; we know too what the world owes to that dwarfish, bald, stammering man. I never in my life read anything more touching than the story of that poor weakly creature, Dr. George Wilson, the Professor of Technology in the University of Edinburgh. Poor weakly creature, only in a physical sense; what a noble intellectual and moral nature dwelt within that slender frame! You remember how admirably he did his work, though in a condition of almost ceaseless bodily weakness and suffering; how he used to lecture often with a great blister on his chest; how his lungs and his entire system were the very poorest that could just retain his soul. I never saw him; but I have seen his portrait. You see the intellectual kindly face; but it is but the weakly shadow of a physical man. But it was only physically that George Wilson was a poor type of humanity. What noble health and excellence there were in that noble mind and heart! So amiable, so patient, so unaffectedly pious, so able and industrious; a beautiful example of a great, good, memorable and truly loveable man. Let us thank God for George Wilson: for his life and his example. Hundreds of poor souls ready to sink into morbid despair of ever doing anything good, will get fresh hope and heart from his story. It is well, indeed, that there have been some in whom the physical system equals the moral; men like Christopher North and Sydney Smith, — men in whom the play of the lungs was as good as the play of the imagination, and whose literal heart was as excellent as their metaphysical. We have all seen examples in which the noblest intellect and kindest disposition were happily blended

with the stoutest limbs and the pleasantest face. And the sound mind in the sound body is doubtless the perfection of the human being. I have walked many miles and many hours over the heather, with one of the ablest men in Britain: a man whom at fourseore his country can heartily trust with perhaps the gravest charge which any British subject can undertake. And I have witnessed with great delight the combination of the keenest head and best heart, with physieal strength and activity which quite knock up men younger by forty years.

When I was reading Dr. Forbes Winslow's book, already named, a very painful idea was impressed upon me. Dr. Winslow gives us to understand that madness is for the most part a condition of most awful suffering. I used to think that though there might be dreadful misery on the way to madness, yet once reason was fairly overthrown, the suffering was over. This appears not to be so. All the miserable depression of spirits, all the incapacity to banish distressing fears and suspicions, which paved the way to real insanity, exist in even intensified degree when insanity has actually been reached. The poor maniac fancies he is surrounded by burning fires, that he is encircled by writhing snakes, that he is in hell, tormented by devils; and we must remember that the misery caused by firmly believing a thing which does not exist, is precisely the same as that which would be occasioned to a sane person if the things imagined were facts. It seems, too, that many insane people are quite aware that they are insane, which of course aggravates what they have to endure. It must be a dreadful thing when the mind passes the point up to which it is still useful and serviceable, though unsound, and enters upon the stage of recognized insanity. It must be dreadful to

feel that you are not quite yourself; that something is wrong; that you cannot discard suspicions and fears which still you are aware are foolish and groundless. This is a melancholy stage, and if it last long a very perilous one. Great anxiety, if continued for any length of time, is almost certain to lead to some measure of insanity. The man who night and day is never free from the thought of how he is to pay his way, to maintain his children, is going mad. It is thoroughly evil when one single thought comes to take entire possession of the mind. It shows the brain is going. It is no wonder, my friendly reader, that so many men are mentally screws! There is something perfectly awful in reading what are the premonitory symptoms of true insanity. Read this, my friend, and be afraid of yourself. Here are what Dr. Winslow says indicates that insanity is drawing near. Have you never seen it? Have you never felt it?

The patient is irritable, and fractious, peevish, and pettish. He is morbidly anxious about trifles: slight ruffles on the surface, and trivial annoyances in the family circle or during the course of business, worry, flurry, tease and fret him, nothing satisfying or soothing his mind, and everything, to his distempered fancy, going wrong within the sacred precincts of domestic life. He is quick at fancying affronts, and greatly exaggerates the slightest and most trifling acts of supposed inattention. The least irregularity on the part of the domestics excites, angers, and vexes him. He is suspicious of and quarrels with his nearest relations, and mistrusts his best, kindest, and most faithful friends. While in this premonitory stage of mental derangement, bordering closely on an attack of acute insanity, he twists, distorts, misconceives, misconstrues, and perverts in a most singular manner every look, gesture, action, and word of those closely associated, and nearly related to him.

Considering that Dr. Winslow does really in that paragraph sketch the moral characteristics of at least a score of people known to every one of us, all this is alarming

enough. And considering, too, how common a thing sleeplessness is among men who go through hard mental work, or who are pressed by many cares and anxieties, it is even more alarming to read, that —

Wakefulness is one of the most constant concomitants of some types of incipient brain disease, and in many cases *a certain forerunner of insanity*. It is an admitted axiom in medicine, that the brain cannot be in a healthy condition while a state of sleeplessness exists.

But I pass away from this part of my subject. I do not believe that it is good for either my readers or myself to look from a medical point of view at those defects or morbid manifestations in our mental organization which stamp us screws. We accept the fact, generally ; without going into details. It is a bad thing for a man to be always feeling his pulse after every little exertion, and fancying that its acceleration or irregularity indicates that something is wrong. Such a man is in the fair way to settled hypochondria. And I think it is even worse to be always watching closely the play of the mental machine, and thinking that this process or that emotion is not as it ought to be. Let a man work his mind fairly and moderately, and not worry himself as to its state. The mind can get no more morbid habit than that of continually watching itself for a stumble. Except in the case of metaphysicians, whose business it is to watch and analyse the doings of the mind, the mind ought to be like the stomach. You know that your stomach is right, because you never feel that you have one ; but the work intended for that organ is somehow done. And common folk should know that they have minds, only by finding the ends fairly attained, which are intended to be attained by that most sensitive and ticklish piece of machinery.

I think that it is a piece of practical wisdom in driving the mental screw, to be careful how you allow it to dwell too constantly upon any one topic. If you allow yourself to think too much of any subject, you will get a partial craze upon that; you will come to vastly overrate its importance. You will make yourself uncomfortable about it. There once was a man who mused long upon the notorious fact that almost all human beings stoop considerably. Few hold themselves as upright as they ought. And this notion took such hold upon the poor man's mind, that, waking or sleeping, he could not get rid of it; and he published volume after volume to prove the vast extent of the evils which come of this bad habit of stooping, and to show that to get fairly rid of this bad habit would be the regeneration of the human race, physically and morally. We know how authors exaggerate the claims of their subject; and I can quite imagine a very earnest man feeling afraid to think too much and long about any existing evil, for fear it should greatnessen on his view into a thing so large and pernicious, that he should be constrained to give all his life to wrestling with that one thing, and attach to it an importance which would make his neighbours think him a monomaniac. If you think long and deeply upon any subject, it grows in apparent magnitude and weight; if you think of it too long, it may grow big enough to exclude the thought of all things besides. If it be an existing and prevalent evil you are thinking of, you may come to fancy that if that one thing were done away, it would be well with the human race. All evil would go with it. I can conceive the process by which, without mania, without anything worse than the workable unsoundness of the practically sound mind, one might come to think as the man who wrote against stoop-

ing thought. For myself, I feel the force of this law so deeply, that there are certain evils of which I am afraid to think much, for fear I should come to be able to think of nothing else and nothing more. I remember, when I was a boy, there was a man in London who constantly advertised himself in the newspapers as the *Inventor of the only Rational System of Writing in the Universe*. His system was, I believe, to move in writing, not the fingers merely, but the entire arm from the shoulder. This may be an improvement perhaps: and that man had brooded over the mischiefs of moving the fingers in writing till these mischiefs shut out the view of the rest of creation, or at least till he saw nothing but irrationality in writing otherwise. All the millions who wrote by the fingers were cracked. The writing-master, in short, though possibly a reasonable man on other subjects, was certainly unsound upon this. You may allow yourself to speculate on the chance of being bitten by a mad dog, or of being maimed by a railway accident, till you grow morbid on these points. If you live in the country, you may give in to the idea that your house will be broken into at night by burglars, till, every time you wake in the dark hours, you may fancy you hear the centre-bit at work boring through the window-shutters down stairs. A very clever woman once told me, that for a year she yielded so much to the fear that she had left a spark behind her in any room into which she had gone with a lighted candle, which spark would set the house on fire, that she could not be easy till she had groped her way back in the dark to see that things were right. Now, ye readers whose minds must be carefully driven (I mean all the readers who will ever see this page), don't give in to these fancies. As you would carefully train your horse to pass the corner he

always shies at, so break your mind of this bad habit. And in breaking your mind of the smallest bad habit, I would counsel you to resort to the same kindly Helper whose aid you would ask in breaking your mind of the greatest and worst. It is not a small matter, the existence in the mind of any tendency or characteristic which is unsound. We know what lies in that direction. You are like the railway-train which, with breaks unapplied, is stealing the first yard down the incline at the rate of a mile in two hours ; but if that train be not pulled up, in ten minutes it may be tearing down to destruction at sixty miles an hour.

I have said that almost every human being is mentally a screw ; that all have some intellectual peculiarity, some moral twist, away from the normal standard of rightness. Let it be added, that it is little wonder that the fact should be as it is. I do not think merely of a certain unhappy warping, of an old original wrench, which human nature long ago received, and from which it never has recovered. I am not writing as a theologian ; and so I do not suggest the grave consideration that human nature, being fallen, need not be expected to be the right-working machinery that it may have been before it fell. But I may at least say, look how most people are educated ; consider the kind of training they get, and the incompetent hands that train them : what chance have they of being anything but screws ? Ah, my reader, if horses were broken by people as unfit for their work as most of the people who form human minds, there would not be a horse in the world that would not be dead lame. You do not trust your thorough-bred colt, hitherto unhandled, to any one who is not understood to have a thorough knowledge of the characteristics and education

of horses. But in numberless instances, even in the better classes of society, a thing which needs to be guarded against a thousand wrong tendencies, and trained up to a thousand right things from which it is ready to shrink, the most sensitive and complicated thing in nature, the human soul, is left to have its character formed by hands as hopelessly unfit for the task as the Lord Chancellor is to prepare the winner of the next St. Leger. You find parents and guardians of children systematically following a course of treatment calculated to bring out the very worst tendencies of mind and heart that are latent in the little things given to their care. If a young horse has a tendency to shy, how carefully the trainer seeks to win him away from the habit. But if a poor little boy has a hasty temper, you may find his mother taking the greatest pains to irritate that temper. If the little fellow have some physical or mental defect, you have seen parents who never miss an opportunity of throwing it in the boy's face; parents who seem to exult in the thought that they know the place where a touch will always cause to wince, — the sensitive, unprotected point where the dart of malignity will never fail to get home. If a child has said or done some wrong or foolish thing, you will find parents who are constantly raking up the remembrance of it, for the pure pleasure of giving pain. Even so would a kindly man, who knows that his horse has just come down and cut himself, take pains whenever he came to a bit of road freshly macadamized to bring down the poor horse on the sharp stones again with his bleeding knees. And even where you do not find positive malignity in those entrusted with the training of human minds, you find hopeless incompetency exhibited in many other ways; outrageous silliness and

vanity, want of honesty, and utter want of sense. I say it deliberately, instead of wondering that most minds are such screws, I wonder with indescribable surprise that they are not a thousand times worse. For they are like trees pruned and trained into ugliness and barrenness. They are like horses carefully tutored to shy, kick, rear, and bite. It says something hopeful as to what may yet be made of human beings, that most of them are no worse than they are. Some parents, fancying too that they are educating their children on Christian principles, educate them in such fashion that the only wonder is that the children do not end at the gallows.

Let us recognise the fact in all our treatment of others, that we have to deal with screws. Let us not think, as some do, that by ignoring a fact you make it cease to be a fact. I have seen a man pulling his lame horse up tight, and flicking it with his whip, and trying to drive it as if it were not lame. Now, that won't do. The poor horse makes a desperate effort, and runs a step or two as if sound. But in a little the heavy head falls upon the bit at each step, and perhaps the creature comes down bodily with a tremendous smash. If it were only his idiotic master that was smashed, I should not mind. So have I seen parents refusing to see or allow for the peculiarities of their children, insisting on driving the poor screw as though it were perfect in wind and limb. So have I seen people refusing to see or allow for the peculiarities of those around them; ignoring the depressed spirits, the unhappy twist, the luckless perversity of temper, in a servant, an acquaintance, a friend, which, rightly managed, would still leave them most serviceable screws; but which, determinedly ignored, will land in uselessness

and misery. I believe there are people who (in a moral sense), if they have a crooked stick, fancy that by using it as if it were straight, it will become straight. If you have got a rifle that sends its ball somewhat to the left side, you (if you are not a fool) allow for that in shooting. If you have a friend of sterling value, but of erotchety temper, you (if you are not a fool) allow for that. If you have a child who is weak, desponding, and early old, you (if you are not a hopeless idiot) remember that, and allow for it, and try to make the best of it. But if you be an idiot, you will think it deep diplomacy, and adamantine firmness, and wisdom beyond Solomon's, to shut your eyes to the state of facts; to tug sharply the poor screw's mouth, to lash him violently, to drive him as though he were sound. Probably you will come to a smash: alas! that the smash will probably include more than you.

Not, reader, that all human beings thus idiotically ignore the fact that it is with screws they have to deal. It is very touching to see, as we sometimes see, people trying to make the best of awful screws. You are quite pleased if your lame horse trots four or five miles without showing very gross unsoundness, though of course this is but a poor achievement. And even so, I have been touched to see the child quite happy at having coaxed a graceless father to come for once to church; and the wife quite happy when the blackguard bully, her husband, for once evinces a little kindness. It was not much they did, you see: but remember what wretched screws did it, and be thankful if they do even that little. I have heard a mother repeat, with a pathetic pride, a connected sentence said by her idiot boy. You remember how delighted Miss Trotwood was, in Mr. Dickens's

beautiful story, with Mr. Dick's good sense, when he said something which in anybody else would have been rather silly. But Mr. Dick, you see, was just out of the Asylum, and no more. How pleased you are to find a relation, who is a terrific fool, merely behaving like anybody else !

Yes : there is a good deal of practical resignation in this world. We get reconciled to having and to being screws. We grow reconciled to the fact that our possessions, our relations, our friends, are very far indeed from being what we could wish. We grow reconciled to the fact, and we try to make the best of it, that we ourselves are screws : that in temper, in judgment, in talent, in tact, we are a thousand miles short of being what we ought ; and that we can hope for little more than decently, quietly, sometimes wearily and sadly, to plod along the path in life which God in his kindness and wisdom has set us. We come to look with interest, but without a vestige of envy, at those who are cleverer and better off than ourselves. A great many good people are so accustomed to things going against them, that they are rather startled when things go as they could have desired : they can stand disappointment, but success puts them out, it is so unwonted a thing. The lame horse, the battered old gig, — they feel at home with these ; but they would be confused if presented with my friend Smith's drag, with its beautiful steeds, all but thoroughbred, and perfectly sound. To struggle on with a small income, manifold worries, and lowly estimation, — to these things they have quietly reconciled themselves. But give them wealth, and peace, and fame (if these things can be combined), and they would hardly know

what to do. Yesterday I walked up a very long flight of steps in a very poor part of the most beautiful city in Britain. Just before me, a feeble old woman, bent down apparently by eighty years, was slowly ascending. She had a very large bundle on her back, and she supported herself by a short stick in her withered, trembling hand. If it had been in the country, I should most assuredly have carried up the poor creature's bundle for her; but I am sorry to say I had not moral courage to offer to do so in town: for a parson with a great sackcloth bundle on his back, would be greeted in that district with depreciatory observations. But I kept close by her, to help her if she fell; and when I got to the top of the steps I passed her and went on. I looked sharply at the poor old face in passing; I see it yet. I see the look of cowed, patient, quiet, hopeless submission: I saw she had quite reconciled her mind to bearing her heavy burden, and to the far heavier load of years, and infirmities, and poverty, she was bearing too. She had accepted those for her portion in this life. She looked for nothing better. She was like the man whose horse has been broken-winded and lame so long, that he has come almost to think that every horse is a screw. I see yet the quiet, wearied, surprised look she cast up at me as I passed: a look merely of surprise to see an entire coat in a place where my fellow-creatures (every one deserving as much as me) for the most part wear rags. I do not think she even wished to possess an equally entire garment: she looked at it with interest merely as the possession of some one else. She did not *even herself* (as we Scotch say) to anything better than the rags she had worn so long. Long experience had subdued her to what she is.

But short experience does so too. We early learn to

be content with screws, and to make the best of imperfect means. As I have been writing that last paragraph, I have been listening to a colloquy outside my study door, which is partly open. The parties engaged in the discussion were a certain little girl of five years old, and her nurse. The little girl is going out to spend the day at the house of a little companion; and she is going to take her doll with her. I heard various sentences not quite distinctly, which conveyed to me a general impression of perplexity; and at length, in a cheerful, decided voice, the little girl said, '*The people will never know it has got no legs!*' The doll, you see, was unsound. Accidents had brought it to an imperfect state. But that wise little girl had done what you and I, my reader, must try to do very frequently: she had made up her mind to make the best of a screw.

I learn a lesson, as I close my essay, from the old woman of eighty, and the little girl of five. Let us seek to reconcile our minds both to possessing screws, and (harder still) to being screws. Let us make the best of our imperfect possessions, and of our imperfect selves. Let us remember that a great deal of good can be done by means which fall very far short of perfection; that our moderate abilities, honestly and wisely husbanded and directed, may serve valuable ends in this world before we quit it, — ends which may remain after we are gone. I do not suppose that judicious critics, in pointing out an author's faults, mean that he ought to stop writing altogether. There are hopeless cases in which he certainly ought: cases in which the steed passes being a screw, and is fit only for the hounds. But in most instances the critic would be quite wrong, if he argued that because his author has many flaws and defects, he

should write no more. With all its errors, what he writes may be much better than nothing ; as the serviceable serew is better than no horse at all. And if the eritie's purpose is merely to show the author that the author is a serew, — why, if the author have any sense at all, he knows that already. He does not claim to be wiser than other men ; and still less to be better : yet he may try to do his best. With many defeets and errors, still fair work may be turned off. I will not forget the lame horses that took the eoach so well to Inverary. And I remember certain words in which one who is all but the greatest English poet declared that under the heavy visitation of God he would do his utmost still. Here is the resolution of a noble serew : —

I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward !



CHAPTER VII.

CONCERNING SOLITARY DAYS.

LET me look back, this New Year's time, over nine years. Let me try to revive again the pervading atmosphere of the days when I used to live entirely alone. All days crush up into very little in the perspective. The months and years which were long as they passed over, are but a hand-breadth in remembrance. Five or ten years may be packed away into a very little corner in your mind; and in the case of a man brought up from childhood in a large family, who spends no more than three or four years alone before he again sees a household beginning to surround him, I think those lonely years seem especially short in the retrospect. Yet possibly in these he may have done some of the best work of his life; and possibly none, of all the years he has seen, have produced so great an impression on his character and on his temperament. And the impression left may be most diverse in nature. I have known a man remarkably gentle, kind, and sympathetic; always anxious to say a pleasant and encouraging word; discerning by a wonderful intuition whenever he had presented a view or made a remark that had caused pain to the most

sensitive, and eager to efface the painful feeling; and I have thought that in all this I could trace the result of his having lived entirely alone for many years. I have known a man insufferably arrogant, conceited, and self-opinionated; another morbidly suspicious and ever nervously anxious; another conspicuously devoid of common sense; and in each of these I have thought I could trace the result of a lonely life. But indeed it depends so entirely on the nature of the material subjected to the mill what the result turned off shall be, that it is hard to say of any human being what shall be the effect produced upon his character by almost any discipline you can think of. And a solitary life may make a man either thoughtful or vacant, either humble or conceited, either sympathetic or selfish, either frank or shrinkingly shy.

Great numbers of educated people in this country live solitary lives. And by a solitary life I do not mean a life in a remote district of country with hardly a neighbour near, but with your house well filled and noisy with children's voices. By a solitary life I mean a life in which, day after day and week after week, you rise in the morning in a silent dwelling, in which, save servants, there are none but yourself; in which you sit down to breakfast by yourself, perhaps set yourself to your day's work all alone, then dine by yourself, and spend the evening by yourself. Barristers living in chambers in some cases do this; young lads living in lodgings, young clergymen in country parsonages, old bachelors in handsome town houses and beautiful country mansions, old maids in quiet streets of country towns, old ladies once the centre of cheerful families, but whose husband and children are gone — even dukes in palaces and castles,

amid a lonely splendour which must, one would think, seem dreary and ghastly. But you know, my reader, we sympathize the most completely with that which we have ourselves experienced. And when I hear people talk of a solitary life, the picture called up before me is that of a young man who has always lived as one of a household considerable in numbers, who gets a living in the Church, and who, having no sister to keep house for him, goes to it to live quite alone. How many of my friends have done precisely that ! Was it not a curious mode of life ? A thing is not made commonplace to your own feeling by the fact that hundreds or thousands of human beings have experienced the very same. And although fifty Smiths have done it (all very clever fellows), and fifty Robinsons have done it (all very commonplace and ordinary fellows), one does not feel a bit the less interest in recurring to that experience which, hackneyed as it may be, is to you of greater interest than all other experience, in that it is your own. Draw up a thousand men in a row, all dressed in the same dark-green uniform of the riflemen ; and I do not think that their number, or their likeness to one another, will cause any but the most unthinking to forget that each is an individual man as much as if he stood alone in the desert ; that each has his own ties, cares, and character, and that possibly each, like to all the rest as he may appear to others, is to several hearts, or perhaps to one only, the one man of all mankind.

Most clergymen whom I have known divide their day very much in the same fashion. After breakfast they go into their study and write their sermon for two or three hours ; then they go out and visit their sick or make other calls of duty for several hours. If they have

a large parish, they probably came to it with the resolution that before dinner they should always have an hour's smart walk at least ; but they soon find that duty encroaches on that hour, and finally eats it entirely up, and their duty calls are continued till it is time to return home to dinner. Don't you remember, my friend, how short a time that lonely meal lasted, and how very far from jovial the feast was ? As for me, that I might rest my eyes from reading between dinner and tea (a thing much to be desired in the case of every scholar), I hardly ever failed, save for a few weeks of midwinter, to go out in the twilight and have a walk — a solitary and very slow walk. My hours, you see, were highly unfashionable. I walked from half-past five to half-past six : *that* was my after-dinner walk. It was always the same. It looks somewhat dismal to recall. Do you ever find, in looking back at some great trial or mortification you have passed through, that you are pitying yourself as if you were another person ? I do not mean to say that those walks were a trial. On the contrary, they were always an enjoyment — a subdued quiet enjoyment, as are the enjoyments of solitary folk. Still, now looking back, it seems to me as if I were watching some one else going out in the cold February twilight, and walking from half-past five to half-past six. I think I see a human being, wearing a very thick and rough great-coat, got for these walks, and never worn on any other occasion, walking very slowly, bearing an extremely thick oak walking-stick (I have it yet) by the shore of the bleak gray sea. Only on the beach did I ever bear that stick ; and by many touches of the sand it gradually wore down till it became too short for use. I see the human being issuing from the door of a little parsonage

(not the one where there are magnificent beeches and rich evergreens and climbing roses), and always waiting at the door for him there was a friendly dog, a terrier, with very short legs and a very long back, and shaggy to that degree that at a cursory glance it was difficult to decide which was his head and which his tail. Ah, poor old dog, you are grown very stiff and lazy now, and time has not mellowed your temper. Even then it was somewhat doubtful. Not that you ever offered to bite me ; but it was most unlucky, and it looked most invidious, that occasion when you rushed out of the gate and severely tore the garments of the dissenting minister ! But he was a worthy man : and I trust that he never supposed that upon that day you acted by my instigation. You were very active then ; and so few faces did you see (though a considerable town was within a few hundred yards), that the appearance of one made you rush about and bark tremendously. Cross a field, pass through a hedgerow of very scrubby and stunted trees, cross a railway by a path on the level, go on by a dirty track on its further side ; and you come upon the sea-shore. It is a level, sandy beach ; and for a mile or two inland the ground is level, and the soil ungenial. There are sandy downs, thinly covered with coarse grass. Trees will hardly grow ; the few trees there are, are cut down by the salt winds from the Atlantic. The land view, in a raw twilight of early spring, is dreary beyond description ; but looking across the sea, there is a magnificent view of mountain peaks. And if you turn in another direction, and look along the shore, you will see a fine hill rising from the sea and running inland, at whose base there flows a beautiful river, which pilgrims come hundreds of miles to visit. How often, O sandy beach,

have these feet walked slowly along you ! And in these years of such walks, I did not meet or see in all six human beings. A good many years have passed since I saw that dismal beach last ; I dare say it would look very strange now. The only excitement of those walks consisted in sending the dog into the sea, and in making him run after stones. How tremendously he ran ; what tiger-like bounds he made, as he overtook the missile ! Just such walks, my friends, many of you have taken. *Homines estis*. And then you have walked into your dwelling again, walked into your study, had tea in solitude, spent the evening alone in reading and writing. You have got on in life, let it be hoped ; but you remember well the aspect and arrangement of the room ; you remember where stood tables, chairs, candles ; you remember the pattern of the grate, often vacantly studied. I think every one must look back with great interest upon such days. Life was in great measure before you, what you might do with it. For anything you knew then, you might be a great genius ; whereas if the world, even ten years later, has not yet recognized you as a great genius, it is all but certain that it never will recognize you as such at all. And through those long winter evenings, often prolonged far into the night, not only did you muse on many problems, social, philosophical, and religious, but you pictured out, I dare say, your future life, and thought of many things which you hoped to do and to be.

A very subdued mood of thought and feeling, I think, creeps gradually over a man living such a solitary life. I mean a man who has been accustomed to a house with many inmates. There is something odd in the look of an apartment in which hardly a word is ever spoken.

If you speak while by yourself, it is in a very low tone and though you may smile, I don't think any sane man could often laugh heartily while by himself. Think of a life in which, while at home, there is no talking and no laughing. Why, one distinctive characteristic of rational man is cut off when laughing ceases. Man is the only living creature that laughs with the sense of enjoyment. I have heard, indeed, of the laughing hyena; but my information respecting it is mainly drawn from Shakspeare, who was rather a great philosopher and poet than a great naturalist. 'I will laugh like a hyen,' says that great man; and as these words are spoken as a threat, I apprehend the laughter in question is of an unpleasant and unmirthful character. But to return from such deep thoughts, let it be repeated, that the entire mood of the solitary man is likely to be a sobered and subdued one. Even if hopeful and content, he will never be in high spirits. The highest degree in the scale he will ever reach, may be that of quiet lightheartedness; and *that* will come seldom. Jollity, or exhilaration, is entirely a social thing. I do not believe that even Sydney Smith could have got into one of his rollicking veins when alone. He enjoyed his own jokes, and laughed at them with extraordinary zest; but he enjoyed them because he thought others were enjoying them too. Why, you would be terrified that your friend's mind was going if before entering his room you heard such a peal of merriment from within, as would seem a most natural thing were two or three cheerful companions together. And gradually that chastened, subdued stage comes, in which a man can sit for half an hour before the fire as motionless as marble; even a man who in the society of others is in ceaseless movement. It is an odd feeling,

when you find that you yourself, once the most restless of living creatures, have come to this. I dare say Robinson Crusoe often sat for two or three hours together in his cave, without stirring hand or foot. The vital principle grows weak when isolated. You must have a number of embers together to make a warm fire; separate them, and they will soon go out and grow cold. And even so, to have brisk, conscious, vigorous life, you must have a number of lives together. They keep each other warm. They encourage and support each other. I dare say the solitary man, sitting at the close of a long evening by his lonely fireside, has sometimes felt as though the flame of life had sunk so low that a very little thing would be enough to put it out altogether. From the motionless limbs, from the unstrung hands, it seemed as though vitality had ebbed away, and barely kept its home in the feeble heart. At such a time some sudden blow, some not very violent shock, would suffice to quench the spark for ever. Reading the accounts in the newspapers of the cold, hunger, and misery which our poor soldiers suffered in the Crimea, have you not thought at such a time that a hundredth part of *that* would have been enough to extinguish *you*? Have you not wondered at the tenacity of material life, and at the desperate grasp with which even the most wretched cling to it? Is it worth the beggar's while, in the snow-storm, to struggle on through the drifting heaps towards the town eight miles off, where he may find a morsel of food to half-appease his hunger, and a stone stair to sleep in during the night? Have not you thought, in hours when you were conscious of that shrinking of life into its smallest compass—that retirement of it from the confines of its territory, of which we have been thinking

—that in that beggar's place you would keep up the fight no longer, but creep into some quiet corner, and there lay yourself down and sleep away into forgetfulness? I do not say that the feeling is to be approved, or that it can in any degree bear being reasoned upon; but I ask such readers as have led solitary lives, whether they have not sometimes felt it? It is but the subdued feeling which comes of loneliness carried out to its last development. It is the highest degree of that influence which manifests itself in slow steps, in subdued tones of voice, in motionless musings beside the fire.

Another consequence of a lonely life in the case of many men, is an extreme sensitiveness to impressions from external nature. In the absence of other companions of a more energetic character, the scenes amid which you live produce an effect on you which they would fail to produce if you were surrounded by human friends. It is the rule in nature, that the stronger impression makes you unconscious of the weaker. If you had charged with the Six Hundred, you would not have remarked during the charge that one of your sleeves was too tight. Perhaps in your boyhood, a companion of a turn at once thoughtful and jocular, offered to pull a hair out of your head without your feeling it. And this he accomplished, by taking hold of the doomed hair, and then giving you a knock on the head that brought tears to your eyes. For, in the more vivid sensation of that knock you never felt the little twitch of the hair as it quitted its hold. Yes, the stronger impression makes you unaware of the weaker. And the impression produced either upon thought or feeling by outward scenes, is so much weaker than that produced by the companionship of our kind

that in the presence of the latter influence, the former remains unfelt, even by men upon whom it would tell powerfully in the absence of another. And so it is upon the lonely man that skies and mountains, woods and fields and rivers, tell with their full effect; it is to him that they become a part of life; it is in him that they make the inner shade or sunshine, and originate and direct the processes of the intellect. You go out to take a walk with a friend: you get into a conversation that interests and engrosses you. And thus engrossed, you hardly remark the hedges between which you walk, or the soft outline of distant summer hills. After the first half-mile, you are proof against the influence of the dull December sky, or the still October woods. But when you go out for your solitary walk, unless your mind be very much preoccupied indeed, your feeling and mood are at the will of external nature. And after a few hundred yards, unless the matter which was in your mind at starting be of a very worrying and painful character, you begin gradually to take your tone from the sky above you, and the ground on which you tread. You hear the birds, which, walking with a sympathetic companion, you would never have noticed. You feel the whole spirit of the scene, whether cheerful or gloomy, gently pervading you, and sinking into your heart. I do not know how far all this, continued through months or years of comparative loneliness, may permanently affect character; we can stand a great deal of kneading without being lastingly affected, either for better or worse; but there can be no question at all, that in a solitary life nature rises into a real companion, producing upon our present mood a real effect. As more articulate and louder voices die away upon our ear, we begin to

hear the whisper of trees, the murmur of brooks, the song of birds, with a distinctness and a meaning not known before.

The influence of nature on most minds is likely to be a healthful one ; still, it is not desirable to allow that influence to become too strong. And there is a further influence which is felt in a solitary life, which ought never to be permitted to gain the upper hand. I mean the influence of our own mental moods. It is not expedient to lead too subjective a life. We look at all things, doubtless, through our own atmosphere ; our eyes, to a great extent, *make* the world they see. And no doubt, too, it is the sunshine within the breast that has most power to brighten ; and the thing that can do most to darken is the shadow there. Still, it is not fit that these mental moods should be permitted to arise mainly through the mind's own working. It is not fit that a man should watch his mental moods as he marks the weather ; and be always chronicling that on such a day and such another he was in high or low spirits, he was kindly-disposed or snappish, as the case may be. The more stirring influence of intercourse with others, renders men comparatively heedless of the ups and downs of their own feelings ; change of scenes and faces, conversation, business engagements, may make the day a lively or a depressed one, though they rose at morning with a tendency to just the opposite thing. But the solitary man is apt to look too much inward ; and to attach undue importance to the fancies and emotions which arise spontaneously within his own breast ; many of them in great measure the result of material causes. And as it is not a healthy thing for a man to be always feeling his pulse, and fearing that it shows something amiss ; it is not a healthy thing to follow the analogous

course as regards our immaterial health and development. And I cannot but regard those religious biographies which we sometimes read, in which worthy people of little strength of character record particularly from day to day all the shifting moods and fancies of their minds as regards their religious concerns, as calculated to do a great deal of mischief. It is founded upon a quite mistaken notion of the spirit of true Christianity, that a human being should be ever watching the play of his mind, as one might watch the rise and fall of the barometer; and recording phases of thought and feeling which it is easy to see are in some cases, and in some degree, at least, the result of change of temperature, of dyspepsia, of deranged circulation of the blood, as though these were the unquestionable effects of spiritual influence, either supernal or infernal. Let us try, in the matter of these most solemn of all interests, to look more to great truths and facts which exist quite independently of the impression they may for the time produce upon us; and less to our own fanciful or morbid frames and feelings.

It cannot be denied that, in some respects, most men are better men alone than in the society of their fellows. They are kinder-hearted; more thoughtful; more pious. I have heard a man say that he always acted and felt a great deal more under the influence of religious principle while living in a house all by himself for weeks and months, than he did when the house was filled by a family. Of course this is not saying much for the steadfastness of a man's Christian principle. It is as much as to say that he feels less likely to go wrong when he is not tempted to go wrong. It is as though you said in praise of a horse, that he never shies when there is nothing to

shy at. No doubt, when there are no little vexatious realities to worry you, you will not be worried by them. And little vexatious realities are doubtless a trial of temper and of principle. Living alone, your nerves are not jarred by discordant voices; you are to a great degree free from annoying interruptions; and if you be of an orderly turn of mind, you are not put about by seeing things around you in untidy confusion. You do not find leaves torn out of books; nor carpets strewn with fragments of biscuits; nor mantelpieces getting heaped with accumulated rubbish. Sawdust, escaped from maimed dolls, is never sprinkled upon your table-covers; nor ink poured over your sermons; nor leaves from these compositions cut up for patterns for dolls' dresses. There is an audible quiet which pervades the house, which is favourable to thought. The first evenings, indeed, which you spent alone in it, were almost awful for their stillness; but that sort of nervous feeling soon wears off. And then you have no more than the quiet in which the mind's best work must be done, in the ease of average men.

And there can be little doubt, that when you gird up the mind, and put it to its utmost stretch, it is best that you should be alone. Even when the studious man comes to have a wife and children, he finds it needful that he should have his chamber to which he may retire when he is to grapple with his task of head-work; and he finds it needful, as a general rule, to suffer no one to enter that chamber while he is at work. It is not without meaning that this solitary chamber is called a *study*: the word reminds us that hard mental labour must generally be gone through when we are alone. Any interruption by others breaks the train of thought; and the broken end may never be caught again. You remember how Maturin,

the dramatist, when he felt himself getting into the full tide of composition, used to stick a wafer on his forehead, - to signify to any member of his family who might enter his room, that he must not on any account be spoken to. You remember the significant arrangement of Sir Walter's library, or rather study, at Abbotsford; it contained *one chair*, and no more. Yes, the mind's best work, at the rate of writing, must be done alone. At the speed of talking, the case is otherwise. The presence of others will then stimulate the mind to do its best; I mean to do the best it can do *at that rate of speed*. Talking with a clever man, on a subject which interests you, your mind sometimes produces material which is (for you) so good, that you are truly surprised at it. And a barrister, addressing a judge or a jury, has to do hard mental work, to keep all his wits awake, to strain his intellect to the top of its bent, in the presence of many; but, at the rate of speed at which he does this, he does it all the better for their presenee. So with an extempore preacher. The eager attention of some hundreds of his fellow-creatures spurs him on (if he be mentally and physically in good trim) to do perhaps the very best he ever does. I have heard more than two or three clergymen who preach extempore (that is, who trust to the moment for the words entirely, for the illustration mainly, and for the thought in some degree), declare that they have sometimes felt quite astonished at the fluency with which they were able to express their thoughts, and at the freshness and fulness with which thoughts crowded upon them, while actually addressing a great assemblage of people. Of course, such extemporaneous speaking is an uncertain thing. It is a hit or a miss. A little physieal or mental derangement, and the extempore speaker gets on lamely enough; he

flounders, stammers, perhaps breaks down entirely. But still, I hold that though the extempore speaker may think and say that his mind often produces extempore the best material it ever produces, it is in truth only the best material which it can produce *at the rate of speaking*: and though the freshly manufactured article, warm from the mind that makes it, may interest and impress at the moment, we all know how loose, wordy, and unsymmetrical such a composition always is: and it is unquestionable that the very best product of the human soul must be turned off, not at the rate of speaking, but at the much slower rate of writing: yes, and oftentimes of writing with many pauses between the sentences, and long musing over individual phrases and words. Could Mr. Tennyson have spoken off in half-an-hour any one of the *Idylls of the King*? Could he have said in three minutes any one of the sections of *In Memoriam*? And I am not thinking of the mechanical difficulty of composition in verse: I am thinking of the simple product in thought. Could Bacon have extemporized at the pace of talking, one of his Essays? Or does not Ben Jonson sum up just those characteristics which extempore composition (even the best) entirely wants, when he tells us of Bacon that ‘no man ever wrote more neatly, more pressly; nor suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in that he uttered?’ I take it for granted, that the highest human composition is that which embodies most thought, experience, and feeling; and *that* must be produced slowly and alone.

And if a man’s whole heart be in his work, whether it be to write a book, or to paint a picture, or to produce a poem, he will be content to make his life such as may tend to make him do his work best, even though that mode of life should not be the pleasantest in itself. He

may say to himself, I would rather be a great poet than a very cheerful and happy man ; and if to lead a very retired and lonely life be the likeliest discipline to make me a great poet, I shall submit to that discipline. You must pay a price in labour and self-denial to accomplish any great end. When Milton resolved to write something 'which men should not willingly let die,' he knew what it would cost him. It was to be 'by labour and intent study, which I take to be my portion in this life.' When Mr. Dickens wrote one of his Christmas Books, he shut himself up for six weeks to do it ; he 'put his whole heart into it, and came out again looking as haggard as a murderer.' There is a substratum of philosophic truth in Professor Aytoun's brilliant burlesque of *Firmilian*. That gentleman wanted to be a poet. And being persuaded that the only way to successfully describe tragic and awful feelings was to have actually felt them, he got into all kinds of scrapes of set purpose, that he might know what were the actual sensations of people in like circumstances. Wishing to know what are the emotions of a murderer, he goes and kills somebody. He finds, indeed, that feelings sought experimentally prove not to be the genuine article : still, you see the spirit of the true artist, content to make any sacrifice to attain perfection in his art. The highest excellence, indeed, in some one department of human exertion is not consistent with decent goodness in all : you dwarf the remaining faculties when you develop one to abnormal size and strength. Thus have men been great preachers, but uncommonly neglectful parents. Thus have men been great statesmen, but omitted to pay their tradesmen's bills. Thus men have been great moral and social reformers, whose own lives stood much in need of moral

and social reformation. I should judge from a portrait I have seen of Mr. Thomas Sayers, the champion of England, that this eminent individual has attended to his physical to the neglect of his intellectual development. His face appeared deficient in intelligence, though his body seemed abundant in muscle. And possibly it is better to seek to develop the entire nature — intellectual, moral, and physical — than to push one part of it into a prominence that stunts and kills the rest. It is better to be a complete *man* than to be essentially a poet, a statesman, a prize-fighter. It is better that a tree should be fairly grown all round, than that it should send out one tremendous branch to the south, and have only rotten twigs in every other direction; better, even though that tremendous branch should be the very biggest that ever was seen. Such an inordinate growth in a single direction is truly morbid. It reminds one of the geese whose livers go to form that regal dainty, the *paté de foie gras*. By subjecting a goose to a certain manner of life, you dwarf its legs, wings, and general muscular development; but you make its liver grow as large as itself. I have known human beings who practised on their mental powers a precisely analogous discipline. The power of calculating in figures, of writing poetry, of chess-playing, of preaching sermons, was tremendous; but all their other faculties were like the legs and wings of the fattening goose.

Let us try to be entire human beings, round and complete; and if we wish to be so, it is best not to live too much alone. The best that is in man's nature taken as a whole is brought out by the society of his kind. In one or two respects he may be better in solitude, but not as the complete man. And more especially a good deal

of the society of little children is much to be desired. You will be the better for having them about you, for listening to their stories, and watching their ways. They will sometimes interrupt you at your work, indeed, but their effect upon your moral development will be more valuable by a great deal than the pages you might have written in the time you spent with them. Read over the following verses, which are among the latest written by Longfellow. I do not expect that men who have no children of their own will appreciate them duly; but they seem to me among the most pleasing and touching which that pleasing poet ever wrote. Miserable solitary beings, see what improving and softening influences you miss!

Between the dark and the daylight,
 When the night is beginning to lower,
 Comes a pause in the day's occupations
 That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
 The patter of little feet,
 The sound of a door that is opened,
 And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
 Descending the broad hall-stair,
 Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
 And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
 Yet I know by their merry eyes
 They are plotting and planning together
 To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
 A sudden raid from the hall!
 By three doors left unguarded
 They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret,
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old moustache as I am
Is not a match for you all?

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeons,
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

What shall be said as to the effect which a solitary life will produce upon a man's estimate of himself? Shall it lead him to fancy himself a man of very great importance? Or shall it tend to make him underrate himself, and allow inferior men of superior impudence to take the wall of him? Possibly we have all seen each effect follow from a too lonely mode of life. Each may follow naturally enough. Perhaps it is natural to imagine your mental stature to be higher than it is, when you have no one near with whom you may compare yourself. It no doubt tends to take down a human being from his self-conceit, to find himself no more than one of a large circle, no member of which is disposed to pay any special regard to his judgment, or in any way to

yield him precedence. And the young man who has come in his solitary dwelling to think that he is no ordinary mortal, has that nonsense taken out of him when he goes back to spend some days in his father's house among a lot of brothers of nearly his own age, who are generally the very last of the race to believe in any man. But sometimes the opposite effect comes of the lonely life. You grow anxious, nervous, and timid; you lose confidence in yourself, in the absence of any who may back up your failing sense of your own importance. You would like to shrink into a corner, and to slip quietly through life unnoticed. And all this without affectation, without the least latent feeling that perhaps you are not so very insignificant after all. Yet, even where men have come well to understand how infinitely little they are as regards the estimation of mankind, you will find them, if they live alone, cherishing some vain fancy that some few people, some distant friends, are sometimes thinking of them. You will find them arranging their papers, as though fancying that surely somebody would like some day to see them; and marshalling their sermons, as though in the vague notion that at some future time mortals would be found weak enough to read them. It is one of the things slowly learnt by repeated lessons and lengthening experience, that nobody minds very much about you, my reader. You remember the sensitive test which Dr. Johnson suggested as to the depth of one mortal's feeling for another. How does it affect his appetite? Multitudes in London, he said, professed themselves extremely distressed at the hanging of Dr. Dodd; but how many on the morning he was hung took a materially worse breakfast than usual? Solitary dreamer, fancying that your distant friends feel deep interest in

your goings-on, how many of them are there who would abridge their dinner if the black-edged note arrived by post which will some day chronicle the last fact in your worldly history?

You get, living alone, into little particular ways of your own. You know how, walking along a crowded street, you cannot keep a straight line: at every step you have to yield a little to right or left to avoid the passers-by. This is no great trouble: you do it almost unconsciously, and your journey is not appreciably lengthened. Even so, living in a family, walking along the path of life in the same track with many more, you find it needful scores of times each day to give up your own fancies and wishes and ways, in deference to those of others. You cannot divide the day in that precise fashion which you would yourself like best. You must, in deciding what shall be the dinner-hour, regard what will suit others as well as you. You cannot sit always just in the corner or in the chair you would prefer. Sometimes you must tell your children a story when you are weary, or busy; but you cannot find it in your heart to cast a shadow of disappointment on the eager little faces that come and ask you. You have to stop writing many a time, in the middle of a sentence, to open your study door at the request of a little voice outside; and to admit a little visitor who can give no more definite reason for her visit than that she has come to see you, and tell you she has been a good girl. And all this is well for you. It breaks in hour by hour upon your native selfishness. And it costs you not the slightest effort to give up your own wish to that of your child. Even if to middle age you retain the innocent taste for sweetmeats, would you

not have infinitely greater pleasure in seeing your little boy or girl eating up the contents of your parcel, than in eating them yourself? It is to me a thoroughly disgusting sight to see, as we sometimes do, the wife and children of a family kept in constant terror of the selfish bashaw at the head of the house, and ever on the watch to yield in every petty matter to his whims and fancies. Sometimes, where he is a hard-wrought and anxious man, whose hard work earns his children's bread, and whose life is their sole stay, it is needful that he should be deferred to in many things, lest the overtaxed brain and overstrained nervous system should break down or grow unequal to their task. . But I am not thinking of such cases. I mean cases in which the head of the family is a great fat, bullying, selfish scoundrel; who devours sullenly the choicest dishes at dinner, and walks into all the fruit at dessert, while his wife looks on in silence, and the awe-stricken children dare not hint that they would like a little of what the brutal hound is devouring. I mean cases in which the contemptible dog is extremely well dressed, while his wife and children's attire is thin and bare; in which he liberally tosses about his money in the billiard-room, and goes off in autumn for a tour on the Continent by himself, leaving them to the joyless routine of their unvaried life. It is sad to see the sudden hush that falls upon the little things when he enters the house; how their sports are cut short, and they try to steal away from the room. Would that I were the Emperor of Russia, and such a man my subject! Should not he taste the knout? Should not I make him howl? *That* would be his suitable punishment: for *he* will never feel what worthier mortals would regard as the heavier penalty by far, the utter absence of confidence or real

affection between him and his children when they grow up. He will not mind that there never was a day when the toddling creatures set up a shout of delight at his entrance, and rushed at him and scaled him and searched in his pockets, and pulled him about ; nor that the day will never come when, growing into men and women, they will come to him for sympathy and guidance in their little trials and perplexities. Oh, woful to think that there are parents, held in general estimation too, to whom their children would no more think of going for kindly sympathy, than they would think of going to Nova Zembla for warmth !

But this is an *excursus* : I would that my hand were wielding a stout horsewhip rather than a pen ! Let me return to the point of deviation, and say that a human being, if he be true-hearted, by living in a family, insensibly and constantly is gently turned from his own stiff track ; and goes through life sinuously, so to speak. But the lonely man settles into his own little ways. He is like the man who walks through the desert without a soul to elbow him for miles. He fixes his own hours ; he sits in his own corner, in his peculiar chair ; he arranges the lamp where it best suits himself that it should stand ; he reads his newspaper when he pleases, for no one else wants to see it ; he orders from the club the books that suit his own taste. And all this quite fitly : like the Duke of Argyle's attacks upon Lord Derby, these things please himself, and do harm to nobody. It is not selfishness not to consult the wishes of other people, if there be no other people whose wishes you can consult. And, though with great suffering to himself, I believe that many a kind-hearted, precise old bachelor,

stiffened into his own ways through thirty solitary years would yet make an effort to give them up, if he fancied that to yield a little from them was needful to the comfort of others. He would give up the corner by the fire in which he has sat through the life of a generation: he would resign to another the peg on which his hat has hung through that long time. Still, all this would cost painful effort; and one need hardly repeat the commonplace, that if people intend ever to get married, it is expedient that they should do so before they have settled too rigidly into their own ways.

It is a very touching thing, I think, to turn over the repositories of a lonely man after he is dead. You come upon so many indications of all his little ways and arrangements. In the case of men who have been the heads of large families, this work is done by those who have been most nearly connected with them, and who knew their ways before; and such men, trained hourly to yield their own wishes in things small and great, have comparatively few of those little peculiar ways in which so much of their individuality seems to make its touching appeal to us after they are gone. But lonely men not merely have very many little arrangements of their own, but have a particular reserve in exhibiting these: there is a strong sensitiveness about them: you know how they would have shrunk in life from allowing any one to turn over their papers, or even to look into the arrangements of their wardrobe and their linen-press. I remember once, after the sudden death of a reserved old gentleman, being one of two or three who went over all his repositories. The other people who did so with me were hard-headed lawyers, and did not seem to mind much; but I remember that it appeared to me a most touching sight we saw. All

the little ways into which he had grown in forty lonely years; all those details about his property (a very large one), which in life he had kept entirely to himself — all these we saw. I remember, lying on the top of the documents contained in an iron chest, a little scrap of paper, the back of an ancient letter, on which was written a note of the amount of all his wealth. There you saw at once a secret which in life he would have confided to no one. I remember the precise arrangement of all the little piles of papers, so neatly tied up in separate parcels. I remember the pocket-handkerchiefs, of several different kinds, each set wrapped up by itself in a piece of paper. It was curious to think that he had counted and sorted those handkerchiefs; and now he was so far away. What a contrast, the little cares of many little matters like that, and the solemn realities of the unseen world! I would not on any account have looked over these things alone. I should have had an awe-stricken expectation that I should be interrupted. I should have expected a sudden tap on the shoulder, and to be asked what I was doing there. And doubtless, in many such cases, when the repositories of the dead are first looked into by strangers, some one far away would be present, if such things could be.

Solitary men, of the class which I have in my mind, are generally very hard-wrought men, and are kept too busy to allow very much time for reverie. Still, there is some. There are evening hours after the task is done, when you sit by the fire, or walk up and down your study, and think that you are missing a great deal in this lonely life; and that much more might be made of your stay in this world, while its best years are passing over. You think that there are many pleasant people in the world.

people whom you would like to know, and who might like you if they knew you. But you and they have never met; and if you go on in this solitary fashion, you and they never will meet. No doubt here is your comfortable room; there is the blazing fire and the mellow lamp and the warmly-curtained windows; and pervading the silent chamber, there is the softened murmur of the not distant sea. The backs of your books look out at you like old friends; and after you are married, you won't be able to afford to buy so many. Still, you recall the cheerful society in which you have often spent such hours, and you think it might be well if you were not so completely cut off from it. You fancy you hear the hum of lively conversation, such as gently exhilarates the mind without tasking it; and again you think what a loss it is to live where you hardly ever hear music, whether good or bad. You think of the awkward shyness and embarrassment of manner which grows upon a man who is hardly ever called to join in general conversation. Yes, He knew our nature best who said that it is not good that man should be alone. We lean to our kind. There is indeed a solitariness which is the condition of an individual soul's being, which no association with others can do away; but there is no reason why we should add to that burden of personality which the Bishop of Oxford, in one of his most striking sermons, has shown to be truly 'an awful gift.' And say, youthful recluse (I don't mean *you*, middle-aged bachelor, I mean really young men of five or six and twenty), have you not sometimes, sitting by the fireside in the evening, looked at the opposite easy chair in the ruddy glow, and imagined that easy chair occupied by a gentle companion — one who would bring out into double strength all that is good in you — one

who would sympathize with you and encourage you in all your work — one who would think you much wiser, cleverer, handsomer, and better than any mortal has ever yet thought you — the *Angel in the House*, in short, to use the strong expression of Mr. Coventry Patmore: Probably you have imagined all that: possibly you have in some degree realized it all. If not, in all likelihood the fault lies chiefly with yourself.

It must be a dismal thing for a solitary man to be taken ill: I mean so seriously ill as to be confined to bed, yet not so dangerously ill as to make some relation or friend come at all sacrifices to be with you. The writer speaks merely from logical considerations: happily he never experienced the case. But one can see that in that lonely life, there can be none of those pleasant circumstances which make days in bed, when acute pain is over, or the dangerous turning-point of disease is happily past, as quietly enjoyable days as any man is ever likely to know. No one should ever be seriously ill (if he can help it) unless he be one of a considerable household. Even then, indeed, it will be advisable to be ill as seldom as may be. But to a person who when well is very hard-worked, and a good deal worried, what restful days those are of which we are thinking! You have such a feeling of peace and quietness. There you lie, in lazy luxury, when you are suffering merely the weakness of a serious illness, but the pain and danger are past. All your wants are so thoughtfully and kindly anticipated. It is a very delightful sensation to lift your head from the pillow, and instantly to find yourself giddy and blind from loss of blood, and just drop your head down again. It is not a question, even for the most uneasily exacting conscience, whether you

are to work or not : it is plain you cannot. There is no difficulty on *that* score. And then you are weakened to that degree that nothing worries you. Things going wrong or remaining neglected about the garden or the stable, which would have annoyed you when well, cannot touch you here. All you want is to lie still and rest. Everything is still. You faintly hear the door-bell ring and though you live in a quiet country house where that phenomenon rarely occurs, you feel not the least curiosity to know who is there. You can look for a long time quite contentedly at the glow of the fire on the curtains and on the ceiling. You feel no anxiety about the coming in of the post ; but when your letters and newspapers arrive, you luxuriously read them, a very little at a time, and you soon forget all you have read. You turn over and fall asleep for a while ; then you read a little more. Your reviving appetite makes simple food a source of real enjoyment. The children come in, and tell you wonderful stories of all that has happened since you were ill. They are a little subdued at first, but soon grow noisy as usual ; and their noise does not in the least disturb you. You hear it as though it were miles off. After days and nights of great pain, you understand the blessing of ease and rest : you are disposed to be pleased with everything, and everybody wants to please you. The day passes away, and the evening darkness comes before you are aware. Everything is strange, and everything is soothing and pleasant. The only disadvantage is, that you grow so fond of lying in bed, that you shrink extremely from the prospect of ever getting up again.

Having arrived at this point, at 10.45 on this Friday evening, I gathered up all the pages which have been writ-

ten, and carried them to the fireside, and sitting there, I read them over; and I confess, that on the whole, it struck me that the present essay was somewhat heavy. A severe critic might possibly say that it was stupid. I fancied it would have been rather good when it was sketched out; but it has not come up to expectation. However, it is as good as I could make it; and I trust the next essay may be better. It is a chance, you see, what the quality of any composition shall be. Give me a handle to turn, and I should undertake upon every day to turn it equally well. But in the working of the mental machine, the same pressure of steam, the same exertion of will, the same strain of what powers you have, will not always produce the same result. And if you, reader, feel some disappointment at looking at a new work by an old friend, and finding it not up to the mark you expected, think how much greater his disappointment must have been as the texture rolled out from the loom, and he felt it was not what he had wished. Here, to-night, the room and the house are as still as in my remembrance of the Solitary Days which are gone. But they will not be still to-morrow morning; and they are so now because sleep has hushed two little voices, and stayed the ceaseless movements of four little pattering feet. May those Solitary Days never return. They are well enough when the great look-out is onward; but, oh! how dreary such days must be to the old man whose main prospect is of the past! I cannot imagine a lot more completely beyond all earthly consolation, than that of a man from whom wife and children have been taken away, and who lives now alone in the dwelling once gladdened by their presence, but now haunted by their memory. Let us humbly pray, my reader, that such a lot may never be yours or mine.



CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING GLASGOW DOWN THE WATER.

UPON any day in the months of June, July, August, and September, the stranger who should walk through the handsome streets, crescents, and terraces which form the West End of Glasgow, might be led to fancy that the plague was in the town, or that some fearful commercial crash had brought ruin upon all its respectable families, — so utterly deserted is the place. The windows are all done up with brown paper: the door-plates and handles, ere-while of glittering brass, are black with rust: the flights of steps which lead to the front-doors of the houses have furnished a field for the chalked cartoons of vagabond boys with a turn for drawing. The more fashionable the terrace or crescent, the more completely is it deserted: our feet waken dreary echoes as we pace the pavement. We naturally inquire of the first policeman we meet, What is the matter with Glasgow, — has anything dreadful happened? And we receive for answer the highly intelligible explanation, that the people are all *Down the Water*.

We are enjoying (shall we suppose) our annual holiday from the turmoil of Westminster Hall and the throng of

London streets ; and we have taken Glasgow on our way to the Highlands. We have two or three letters of introduction to two or three of the merchant-princes of the city ; and having heard a great deal of the splendid hospitalities of the Western metropolis of the North, we have been anticipating with considerable satisfaction stretching our limbs beneath their mahogany, and comparing their *cuisine* and their cellar with the descriptions of both which we have often heard from Mr. Allan M'Collop, a Glasgow man who is getting on fairly at the bar. But when we go to see our new acquaintances, or when they pay us a hurried visit at our hotel, each of them expresses his deep regret that he cannot ask us to his house, which he tells us is shut up, his wife and family being *Down the Water*. No explanation is vouchsafed of the meaning of the phrase, which is so familiar to Glasgow folk that they forget how oddly it sounds on the ear of the stranger. Our first hasty impression, perhaps, from the policeman's sad face (no cold meat for him now, honest man), was that some sudden inundation had swept away the entire wealthier portion of the population, — at the same time curiously sparing the toiling masses. But the pleasant and cheerful look of our mercantile friend, as he states what has become of his domestic circle, shows us that nothing very serious is amiss. At length, after much meditation, we conclude that the people are at the sea-side ; and as *that* lies down the Clyde from Glasgow, when a Glasgow man means to tell us that his family and himself are enjoying the fresh breezes and the glorious scenery of the Frith of Clyde, he says they are *Down the Water*.

Everybody everywhere of course longs for the country, the sea-side, change of air and scene, at some period

during the year. Almost every man of the wealthier and more cultivated class in this country has a vacation, longer or shorter. But there never was a city whence the annual migration to the sea-side is so universal or so protracted as it is from Glasgow. By the month of March in each year, every house along the coast within forty miles of Glasgow is let for the season at a rent which we should say must be highly remunerative. Many families go to the coast early in May, and every one is *down the water* by the first of June. Most people now stay till the end of September. The months of June and July form what is called 'the first season;' August and September are 'the second season.' Until within the last few years, one of these 'seasons' was thought to furnish a Glasgow family with vigour and buoyancy sufficient to face the winter, but now almost all who can afford it stay at the sea-side during both. And from the little we have seen of Glasgow, we do not wonder that such should be the case. No doubt Glasgow is a fine city on the whole. The Trongate is a noble street; the park on the banks of the Kelvin, laid out by Sir Joseph Paxton, furnishes some pleasant walks; the Sauchyhall-road is an agreeable promenade; Claremont, Crescent and Park Gardens consist of houses which would be of the first class even in Belgravia or Tyburnia; and from the West-end streets, there are prospects of valley and mountain which are worth going some distance to see. But the atmosphere, though comparatively free from smoke, wants the exhilarating freshness of breezes just arrived from the Atlantic. The sun does not set in such glory beyond Gilmore-hill, as behind the glowing granite of Goatfell; and the trunks of the trees round Glasgow are (if truth must be spoken) a good deal blacker than might be desired, while their

leaves are somewhat shrivelled up by the chemical gales of St. Rollox. No wonder, then, that the purest of pure air, the bluest of blue waves, the most picturesque of noble hills, the most purple of heather, the greenest of ivy, the thickest of oak-leaves, the most fragrant of roses and honeysuckle, should fairly smash poor old Glasgow during the summer months, and leave her not a leg to stand on.

The ladies and children of the multitudinous families that go *down the water*, remain there permanently, of course : most of the men go up to business every morning and return to the sea-side every night. This implies a journey of from sixty to eighty miles daily ; but the rapidity and the cheapness of the communication, render the journey a comparatively easy one. Still, it occupies three or four hours of the day ; and many persons remain in town two or three nights weekly, smuggling themselves away in some little back parlour of their dismantled dwellings. But let us accept our friend's invitation to spend a few days at his place *down the water*, and gather up some particulars of the mode of life there.

There are two ways of reaching the coast from Glasgow. We may sail all the way down the Clyde, in steamers generally remarkably well-appointed and managed ; or we may go by railway to Greenock, twenty-three miles off, and catch the steamer there. By going by railway we save an hour, — a great deal among people with whom emphatically time is money, — and we escape a somewhat tedious sail down the river. The steamer takes two hours to reach Greenock, while some express trains which run all the way without stopping, accomplish the distance in little more than half an hour. The sail down the Clyde to Greenock is in parts very interesting. The banks of the river are in some places

richly wooded : on the north side there are picturesque hills ; and the huge rock on which stands the ancient castle of Dumbarton, is a striking feature. But we have never met any Glasgow man or woman who did not speak of the sail between Glasgow and Greenock as desperately tedious, and by all means to be avoided. Then in warm summer weather the Clyde is nearly as filthy as the Thames ; and sailing over a sewer, even through fine scenery, has its disadvantages. So we resolve to go with our friend by railway to Greenock, and thus come upon the Clyde where it has almost opened into the sea. Quite opened into the sea, we might say : for at Greenock the river is three miles broad, while at Glasgow it is only some three hundred yards.

‘ Meet me at Bridge-street station at five minutes to four,’ says Mr. B——, after we have agreed to spend a few days on the Clyde. There are a couple of hours to spare, which we give to a basin of very middling soup at McLerie’s, and to a visit to the cathedral, which is a magnificent specimen of the severest style of Gothic architecture. We are living at the Royal Hotel in George Square, which we can heartily recommend to tourists ; and when our hour approaches, Boots brings us a cab. We are not aware whether there is any police regulation requiring the cabs of Glasgow to be extremely dirty, and the horses that draw them to be broken-winded, and lame of not more than four nor less than two legs. Perhaps it is merely the general wish of the inhabitants that has brought about the present state of things. However this may be, the unhappy animal that draws us reaches Bridge-street station at last. As our carriage draws up we catch a glimpse of half-a-dozen men, in that peculiar green dress which railway servants affect, hastening to

conceal themselves behind the pillars which decorate the front of the building, while two or three excited ticket-porters seize our baggage, and offer to carry it up-stairs. But our friend with Scotch foresight and economy, has told us to make the servants of the Company do their work. 'Hands off,' we say to the ticket-porters; and walking up the steps we round a pillar, and smartly tapping on the shoulder one of the green-dressed gentlemen larking there, we indicate to him the locality of our portmanteau. Sulkily he shoulders it, and precedes us to the booking-office. The fares are moderate; eighteen-pence to Greenock, first class: and we understand that persons who go daily, by taking season tickets, travel for much less. The steamers afford a still cheaper access to the sea-side, conveying passengers from Glasgow to Rothesay, about forty-five miles, for sixpence cabin and three-pence deck. The trains start from a light and spacious shed, which has the very great disadvantage of being at an elevation of thirty or forty feet above the ground level. Railway companies have sometimes spent thousands of pounds to accomplish ends not a tenth part so desirable as is the arranging their stations in such a manner as that people in departing, and still more in arriving, shall be spared the annoyance and peril of a break-neck staircase like that at the Glasgow railway station. It is a vast comfort when cabs can draw up alongside the train, under cover, so that people can get into them at once, as at Euston-square.

The railway carriages that run between Glasgow and Greenock have a rather peculiar appearance. The first-class carriages are of twice the usual length, having six compartments instead of three. Each compartment holds eight passengers; and as this accommodation is gained

by increasing the breadth of the carriages, brass bars are placed across the windows, to prevent any one from putting out his head. Should any one do so, his head would run some risk of coming in collision with the other train; and although, from physiological reasons, some heads might receive no injury in such a case, the carriage with which they came in contact would probably suffer. The expense of painting is saved by the carriages being built of teak, which when varnished has a cheerful light-oak colour. There is a great crowd of men on the platform, for the four o'clock train is the chief down-train of the day. The bustle of the business-day is over; there is a general air of relief and enjoyment. We meet our friend punctual to the minute; we take our seat on the comfortable blue cushions; the bell rings; the engine pants and tugs; and we are off 'down the water.'

We pass through a level country on leaving Glasgow: there are the rich fields which tell of Scotch agricultural industry. It is a bright August afternoon: the fields are growing yellow; the trees and hedges still wear their summer green. In a quarter of an hour the sky suddenly becomes overcast. It is not a cloud: don't be afraid of an unfavourable change of weather; we have merely plunged into the usual atmosphere of dirty and ugly Paisley. Without a pause, we sweep by, and here turn off to the right. That line of railway from which we have turned aside runs on to Dumfries and Carlisle; a branch of it keeps along the Ayrshire coast to Ardrossan and Ayr. In a little while we are skimming the surface of a bleak, black moor; it is a dead level, and not in the least interesting: but, after a plunge into the mirk darkness of a long tunnel, we emerge into daylight again, and there, sure enough, are the bright waters of the

Clyde. We are on its south side; it has spread out to the breadth of perhaps a couple of miles. That rocky height on its north shore is Dumbarton Castle; that great mass beyond is Ben Lomond, at whose base lies Loch Lomond, the queen of Scottish lakes, now almost as familiar to many a cockney tourist as a hundred years since to Rob Roy Macgregor. We keep close by the water's edge, skirting a range of hills on which grow the finest strawberries in Scotland. Soon, to the right, we see many masts, many great rafts of timber, many funnels of steamers; and there, creeping along out in the middle of the river, is the steamer we are to join, which left Glasgow an hour before us. We have not stopped since we left Glasgow; thirty-five minutes have elapsed, and now we sweep into a remarkably tasteless and inconvenient station. This is Greenock at last; but, as at Glasgow, the station is some forty feet above the ground. A railway cart at the foot of a long stair receives the luggage of passengers, and then sets off at a gallop down a dirty little lane. We follow at a run; and, a hundred and fifty yards off, we come on a long range of wharf, beside which lie half-a-dozen steamers, sputtering out their white steam with a roar, as though calling impatiently for their passengers to come faster. Our train has brought passengers for a score of places on the Frith; and in the course of the next hour and a half, these vessels will disperse them to their various destinations. By way of guidance to the inexperienced, a post is erected on the wharf, from which arms project, pointing to the places of the different steamers. The idea is a good one, and if carried out with the boldness with which it was conceived, much advantage might be derived by strangers. But a serious drawback about these indicators is.

that they are invariably pointed in the wrong direction which renders them considerably less useful than they might otherwise be. Fortunately we have a guide, for there is not a moment to lose. We hasten on board, over an awkward little gangway, kept by a policeman of rueful countenance, who punches the heads of several little boys who look on with awe. Bareheaded and barefooted girls offer baskets of gooseberries and plums of no tempting appearance. Ragged urchins bellow 'Day's Penny Paper! Glasgow *Daily News*!' In a minute or two, the ropes are east off, and the steamers diverge as from a centre to their various ports.

We are going to Dunoon. Leaving the ship-yards of Greenock echoing with multitudinous hammerings, and rounding a point covered with houses, we see before us Gourock, the nearest to Greenock of the places 'down the water.' It is a dirty little village on the left side of the Frith. A row of neat houses, quite distinct from the dirty village, stretches for two miles along the water's edge. The hills rise immediately behind these. The Frith is here about three miles in breadth. It is Renfrewshire on the left hand; a few miles on, and it will be Ayrshire. On the right are the hills of Argyleshire. And now, for many miles on either side, the shores of the Frith, and the shores of the long arms of the sea that run up among those Argyleshire mountains, are fringed with villas, castles, and cottages—the retreats of Glasgow men and their families. It is not, perhaps, saying much for Glasgow to state that one of its greatest advantages is the facility with which one can get away from it, and the beauty of the places to which one can get. But true it is, that there is hardly a great city in the world which is so well off in this respect. For six-

pence, the artisan of Bridgeton or Calton can travel forty miles in the purest air, over as blue a sea, and amid as noble hills, as can be found in Britain. The Clyde is a great highway: a highway traversed, indeed, by a merchant navy scarcely anywhere surpassed in extent; but a highway, too, whose gracious breezes, through the summer and autumn time, are ever ready to revive the heart of the pale weaver, with his thin wife and child, and to fan the cheek of the poor consumptive needlewoman into the glow of something like country health and strength.

After Greenock is passed, and the river has grown into the Frith, the general features of the scene remain very much the same for upwards of twenty miles. The water varies from three to seven or eight miles in breadth; and then suddenly opens out to a breadth of twenty or thirty miles. Hills, fringed with wood along their base, and gradually passing into moorland as they ascend, form the shores on either side. The rocky islands of the Great and Little Cumbrae occupy the middle of the Frith, about fourteen or fifteen miles below Greenock: to the right lies the larger island of Bute; and further on the still larger island of Arran. The hills on the Argyleshire side of the Frith are generally bold and precipitous: those on the Ayrshire side are of much less elevation. The character of all the places 'down the water' is almost identical: they consist of a row of houses, generally detached villas or cottages, reaching along the shore, at only a few yards distance from the water, with the hills arising immediately behind. The beach is not very convenient for bathing, being generally rocky; though here and there we find a strip of yellow sand. Trees and shrubs grow in the richest way down to the water's edge. The trees are numerous,

and luxuriant rather than large ; oaks predominate ; we should say few of them are a hundred years old. Ivy and honeysuckle grow in profusion ; for several miles along the coast, near Largs, there is a perpendicular wall of rock from fifty to one hundred feet in height, which follows the windings of the shore at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards from the water, enclosing between itself and the sea a long ribbon of fine soil, on which shrubs, flowers, and fruit grow luxuriantly ; and this natural rampart, which advances and retreats as we pursue the road at its base, like the bastions and curtains of some magnificent feudal castle, is in many places elad with ivy, so fresh and green that we can hardly believe that for months in the year it is wet with the salt spray of the Atlantic. Here and there, along the coast, are places where the land is capable of cultivation for a mile or two inland ; but, as the rule, the hill ascends almost from the water's edge, into granite and heather.

Let us try to remember the names of the places which reach along the Frith upon either hand : we believe that a list of them will show that not without reason it is said that Glasgow is unrivalled in the number of her sea-side retreats. On the right hand, as we go down the Frith, there are Helensburgh, Row, Roseneath, Shandon, Gareloch-head, Cove, Kilcreggan, Loehgoil-head, Arrochar, Ardentinn, Strone, Kilmun, Kirn, Dunoon, Inellan, Toward, Port Bannatyne, Rothesay, Askog, Colintrave, Tynabruach. Sometimes these places form for miles one long range of villas. Indeed, from Strone to Toward, ten or twelve miles, the coast is one continuous street. On the left hand of the Frith are Gourock, Ashton, Inverkip, Wemyss Bay, Skelmorlie, Largs, Fairlie : then comes a bleak range of sandy coast, along which stand Ardrossan,

Troon, and Ayr. In the island of Cumbrae is Millport, conspicuous by the tall spire which marks the site of an Episcopal chapel and college of great architectural beauty, built within the last few years. And in Arran are the villages of Lamlash and Brodick. The two Cumbrae islands constitute a parish. A simple-minded clergyman, not long deceased, who held the cure for many years, was wont, Sunday by Sunday, to pray (in the church service) for 'the islands of the Great and Little Cumbrae, and also for the *adjacent islands* of Great Britain and Ireland.'

But all this while the steam has been fiercely chafing through the funnel as we have been stopping at Gourrock quay. We are away at last, and are now crossing the Frith towards the Argyleshire side. A mile or two down, along the Ayrshire side, backed by the rich woods of Ardgowan, tall and spectral-white, stands the Cloch lighthouse. We never have looked at it without thinking how many a heart-broken emigrant must be remembering that severely simple white tower as almost the last thing he saw in Scotland when he was leaving it for ever. The Frith opens before us as we advance: we are running at the rate (quite usual among Clyde steamers) of sixteen or seventeen miles an hour. There, before us, is Cumbrae: over Bute and over Cumbrae look the majestic mountains of Arran; that great granite peak is Goat-fell. And on a clear day, far out, guarding the entrance to the Frith, rising sheer up from the deep sea, at ten miles' distance from the nearest land, looms Ailsa, white with seabirds, towering to the height of twelve or thirteen hundred feet. It is a rocky islet of about a mile in circumference, and must have been thrown up by volcanic agency; for the water around it is hundreds of feet in depth.

Out in the middle of the Frith we can see the long,

low, white line of buildings on either side of it, nestling at the foot of the hills. We are drawing near Dunoon. That opening on the right is the entrance to Loch Long and Loch Goyle; and a little further on we pass the entrance to the Holy Loch, on whose shore is the ancient burying-place of the family of Argyle. How remarkably tasteful many of these villas are! They are generally built in the Elizabethan style: they stand in grounds varying from half an acre up to twenty or thirty acres, very prettily laid out with shrubbery and flowers; a number (we can see, for we are now skirting the Argyleshire coast at the distance of only a few hundred yards) have conservatories and hot-houses of more or less extent: flag-staffs appear to be much affected (for send a landsman to the coast, and he is sure to become much more marine than a sailor): and those pretty bow-windows, with the crimson fuchsias climbing up them — those fantastic gables and twisted chimneys — those shining evergreens and cheerful gravel walks — with no lack of pretty girls in round hats, and sportive children rolling about the trimly-kept grass plots — all seen in this bright August sunshine — all set off against this blue smiling expanse of sea — make a picture so gay and inviting, that we really do not wonder any more that Glasgow people should like to ‘go down the water.’

Here is Dunoon pier. Several of the coast places have, like Dunoon, a long jetty of wood running out a considerable distance into the water, for the accommodation of the steamers, which call every hour or two throughout the day. Other places have deep water close in-shore, and are provided with a wharf of stone. And several of the recently founded villages (and half of those we have enumerated have sprung up within the last ten years) have

no landing-place at which steamers can touch ; and *their* passengers have to land and embark by the aid of a ferry-boat. We touch the pier at last : a gangway is hastily thrown from the pier to the steamer, and in company with many others we go ashore. At the landward end of the jetty, detained there by a barrier of twopence each of toll, in round hats and alpaca dresses, are waiting our friend's wife and children, from whom we receive a welcome distinguished by that frankness which is characteristic of Glasgow people. But we do not intend so far to imitate the fashion of some modern tourists and biographers, as to give our readers a description of our friend's house and family, his appearance and manners. We shall only say of him what will never single him out — for it may be said of hundreds more — that he is a wealthy, intelligent, well-informed, kind-hearted Glasgow merchant. And if his daughters *did* rather bore us by their enthusiastic descriptions of the sermons of 'our minister,' Mr. Macdutr, the still grander orations of Mr. Caird, and the altogether unexampled eloquence of Dr. Cumming, why, they were only showing us a thoroughly Glasgow feature ; for nowhere in Britain, we should fancy, is there so much talk about preaching and preachers.

In sailing down the Frith, one gets no just idea of the richness and beauty of its shores. We have said that a little strip of fine soil, — in some places only fifty or sixty yards in breadth, — runs like a ribbon, occasionally broadening out to three or four times that extent, along the sea-margin ; beyond this ribbon of ground come the wild moor and mountain. In sailing down the Frith, our eye is caught by the large expanse of moorland, and we do not give due importance to the rich strip which bounds it, like an edging of gold lace (to use King

James's comparison) round a russet petticoat. When we land we understand things better. We find next the sea, at almost any point along the Frith, the turnpike road, generally nearly level, and beautifully smooth. Here and there, in the places of older date, we find quite a street of contiguous houses; but the general rule is of detached dwellings of all grades, from the humblest cottage to the most luxurious villa. At considerable intervals, there are residences of a much higher class than even this last, whose grounds stretch for long distances along the shore. Such places are Ardgowan, Kelly, Skelmorlie Castle, and Kelburne, on the Ayrshire side; and on the other shore of the Frith, Roseneath Castle, Toward Castle, and Mountstuart.* And of dwellings of a less ambitious standing than these really grand abodes, yet of a mark much above that suggested by the word villa, we may name the very showy house of Mr. Napier, the eminent maker of marine steam-engines, on the Gareloch, a building in the Saracenic style, which cost we are afraid to say how many thousand pounds; the finely-placed castle of Wemyss, built from the design of Billings; and the very striking piece of baronial architecture called Knock Castle, the residence of Mr. Steel, a wealthy shipbuilder of Greenock. The houses along the Frith are, in Scotch fashion, built exclusively of stone, which is obtained with great facility. Along the Ayrshire coast, the warm-looking red sandstone of the district is to be had everywhere, almost on the surface. One sometimes sees a house rising, the stone being taken

* Ardgowan, residence of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart; Kelly, Mr. Scott; Skelmorlie, the Earl of Eglinton; Kelburne, the Earl of Glasgow; Roseneath, the Duke of Argyle; Toward, Mr. Kirkwall Finlay Mountstuart, the Marquis of Bute.

from a deep quarry close to it: the same crane often serving to lift a block from the quarry, and to place it in its permanent position upon the advancing wall. We have said how rich is vegetation all along the Frith, until we reach the sandy downs from Ardrossan to Ayr. All evergreens grow with great rapidity: ivy covers dead walls very soon. To understand in what luxuriance vegetable life may be maintained close to the sea-margin, one must walk along the road which leads from the West Bay at Dunoon towards Toward. We never saw trees so covered with honeysuckle; and fuchsias a dozen feet in height are quite common. In this sweet spot, in an Elizabethan house of exquisite design, retired within grounds where fine taste has done its utmost, resides, during the summer vacation (and the summer vacation is six months!), Mr. Buchanan, the Professor of Logic in the University of Glasgow. It must be a very fair thing to teach logic at Glasgow, if the revenue of that chair maintains the groves and flowers, and (we may add) the liberal hospitalities, of Ardfillane.

One pleasing circumstance about the Frith of Clyde, which we remark the more from its being unhappily the exception to the general rule in Scotland, is the general neatness and ecclesiastical character of the churches. The parish church of Dunoon, standing on a wooded height, rising from the water, with its grey tower looking over the trees, is a dignified and commanding object. The churches of Roseneath and Row, which have been built within a year or two, are correct and elegant specimens of ecclesiastical Gothic: indeed they are so thoroughly *like* churches, that John Knox would assuredly have pulled them down had they been standing in his day. And here and there along the coast the rich Glas-

gow merchants and the neighbouring proprietors have built pretty little chapels, whose cross-crowned gables, steep-pitched roofs, dark oak wood-work, and stained windows, are pleasant indications that old prejudice has given way among cultivated Scotchmen ; and that it has come to be understood that it is false religion as well as bad taste and sense to make God's house the shabbiest, dirtiest, and most uncomfortable house in the parish. Some of these sea-side places of worship are crowded in summer by a fashionable congregation, and comparatively deserted in winter when the Glasgow folks are gone.

A very considerable number of the families that go 'down the water' occupy houses which are their own property. There must be, one would think, a special interest about a house which is one's own. A man must become attached to a spot where he himself planted the hollies and yews, and his children have marked their growth year by year. Still, many people do not like to be tied to one place, and prefer varying their quarters each season. Very high rents are paid for good houses on the Frith of Clyde. From thirty to fifty pounds a month is a common charge for a neat villa at one of the last founded and most fashionable places. A little less is charged for the months of August and September than for June and July ; and if a visitor takes a house for the four months which constitute *the season*, he may generally have it for May and October without further cost. Decent houses or parts of houses (*flats* as they are called), may be had for about ten pounds a month ; and at those places which approach to the character of a town, as Largs, Rothesay, and Dunoon, lodgings may be obtained where attendance is provided by the people of the house.

A decided drawback about the sea-side places within twenty miles from Greenock, is their total want of that fine sandy beach, so firm and dry and inviting when the tide is out, which forms so great an attraction at Ardrossan, Troon, and Ayr. At a few points, as for instance the West Bay at Dunoon, there is a beautiful expanse of yellow sand: but as a rule, where the shore does not consist of precipitous rocks, sinking at once into deep water, it is made of great rough stones, which form a most unpleasant footing for bathers. In front of most villas a bathing place is formed by clearing the stones away. Bathing machines, we should mention, are quite unknown upon the Frith of Clyde.

So much for the locality which is designated by the phrase, *Down the Water*: and now we can imagine our readers asking what kind of life Glasgow people lead there. Of course there must be a complete breaking up of all city ways and habits, and a general return to a simpler and more natural mode of living. Our few days at Dunoon, and a few days more at two other places on the Frith, were enough to give us some insight into the usual order of things. By seven or half-past seven o'clock in the morning the steam is heard by us, as we are snug in bed, fretting through the waste-pipe of the early boat for Glasgow; and with great complacency we picture to ourselves the unfortunate business-men, with whom we had a fishing excursion last night, already up, and breakfasted, and hurrying along the shore towards the vessel which is to bear them back to the counting-house and the Exchange. Poor fellows! They sacrifice a good deal to grow rich. At each village along the shore the steamer gets an accession to the number of her passengers; for the most part of trim, close-shaved,

well-dressed gentlemen, of sober aspect and not many words; though here and there comes some whiskered and moustached personage, with a shirt displaying a pattern of ballet-dancers, a shooting coat of countless pockets, and trousers of that style which, in our college days, we used to call *loud*. A shrewd bank-manager told us that he always made a mental memorandum of such individuals, in case they should ever come to him to borrow money. Don't they wish they may get it! The steamer parts with her entire freight at Greenock, whence an express train rapidly conveys our friends into the heat and smoke of Glasgow. Before ten o'clock all of them are at their work. For us, who have the day at our own disposal, we have a refreshing dip in the sea at rising, then a short walk, and come in to breakfast with an appetite foreign to Paper Buildings. It is quite a strong sensation when the post appears about ten o'clock, bearing tidings from the toiling world we have left behind. Those families who have their choicest dine at two o'clock — an excellent dinner hour when the day is not a working one: the families whose male members are in town, sometimes postpone the most important engagement of the day till their return at six or half-past six o'clock. As for the occupations of the day, there are boating and yachting, wandering along the beach, lying on the heather looking at Arran through the sun-mist, lounging into the reading-room, dipping into any portion of *The Times* except the leading articles, turning over the magazines, and generally enjoying the blessing of rest. Fishing is in high favour, especially among the ladies. Hooks baited with muscles are sunk to the ground by leaden weights (the fishers are in a boat), and abundance of whittings are caught when the weather is favourable.

We confess we don't think the employment ladylike. Sticking the muscles upon the hooks is no work for fair fingers; neither is the pulling the captured fish off the hooks. And, even in the pleasantest company, we cannot see anything very desirable in sitting in a boat, all the floor of which is covered by unhappy whittings and codlings flapping about in their last agony. Many young ladies row with great vigour and adroitness. And as we walk along the shore in the fading twilight, we often hear, from boats invisible in the gathering shadows, music mellowed by the distance into something very soft and sweet. The lords of the creation have come back by the late boats; and we meet *Pater-familias* enjoying his evening walk, surrounded by his children, shouting with delight at having their governor among them once more. No wonder that, after a day amid the hard matter-of-fact of business life, he should like to hasten away to the quiet fireside and the loving hearts by the sea.

Few are the hard-wrought men who cannot snatch an entire day from business sometimes: and *then* there is a pic-nic. Glasgow folk have even more, we believe, than the average share of stiff dinner parties when in town: we never saw people who seemed so completely to enjoy the freshness and absence of formality which characterize the well-assorted entertainment *al fresco*. We were at one or two of these; and we cannot describe the universal gaiety and light-heartedness, extending to grave Presbyterian divines and learned Glasgow professors; the blue sea and the smiling sky; the rocky promontory where our feast was spread; its abundance and variety; the champagne which flowed like water; the joviality and cleverness of many of the men; the

frankness and pretty faces of *all* of the women.* We had a pleasant yachting excursion one day; and the delight of a new sensation was well exemplified in the intense enjoyment of dinner in the cramped little cabin where one could hardly turn. And great was the sight when our host, with irrepressible pride, produced his preserved meats and vegetables, as for an Arctic voyage, although a messenger sent in the boat which was towing behind could have procured them fresh in ten minutes.

A Sunday at the sea-side, or as Scotch people prefer calling it, a *Sabbath*, is an enjoyable thing. The steamers that come down on Saturday evening are crammed to the last degree. Houses which are already fuller than they can hold, receive half-a-dozen new inmates, — how stowed away we cannot even imagine. We cannot but reject as apocryphal the explanation of a Glasgow *wut*, that on such occasions poles are projected from the upper windows, upon which young men of business roost until the morning. Late walks, and the spooniest of flirtations characterize the Saturday evening. Every one, of course, goes to church on Sunday morning; no Glasgow man who values his character durst stop away. We shall not soon forget the beauty of the calm Sunday on that beautiful shore: the shadows of the distant mountains; the smooth sea; the church-bells, faintly heard from across the water; the universal turning-out of the population to the house of prayer, or rather of

* We do not think, from what we have seen, that Glasgow is rich in *beauties*; though pretty faces are very common. Times are improved, however, since the days of the lady who said, on being asked if there were many beauties in Glasgow, 'Oh no; very few; there are only THREE OF US.'

preaching. It was almost too much for us to find Dr. Cumming here before us, giving all his old brilliancies to enraptured multitudes. We had hoped he was four hundred and odd miles off; but we resigned ourselves, like the Turk, to what appears an inevitable destiny. This gentleman, we felt, is really one of the institutions of the country, and no more to be escaped than the income-tax.

Morning service over, most people take a walk. This would have been regarded in Scotland a few years since as a profanation of the day. But there is a general air of quiet; people speak in lower tones; there are no joking and laughing. And the Frith, so covered with steamers on week-days, is to-day unruffled by a single paddle-wheel. Still it is a mistake to fancy that a Scotch Sunday is necessarily a gloomy thing. There are no excursion trains, no pleasure trips in steamers, no tea-gardens open: but it is a day of quiet domestic enjoyment, not saddened but hallowed by the recognized sacredness of the day. The truth is, the feeling of the sanctity of the *Sabbath* is so ingrained into the nature of most Scotchmen by their early training, that they *could not enjoy* Sunday pleasuring. Their religious sense, their superstition if you choose, would make them miserable on a Sunday excursion.

The Sunday morning service is attended by a crowded congregation: the church is not so full in the afternoon. In some places there is evening service, which is well attended. We shall not forget one pleasant walk, along a quiet road bounded by trees as rich and green as though they grew in Surrey, though the waves were lapping on the rocks twenty yards off, and the sun was going down behind the mountains of Cowal, to a pretty

little chapel where we attended evening worship upon our last Sunday on the Clyde.

Every now and then, as we are taking our saunter by the shore after breakfast, we perceive, well out in the Frith, a steamer, decked with as many flags as can possibly be displayed about her rigging. The strains of a band of music come by starts upon the breeze; a big drum is heard beating away when we can hear nothing else; and a sound of howling springs up at intervals. Do not fancy that these yells imply that anything is wrong; *that* is merely the way in which working folk enjoy themselves in this country. That steamer has been hired for the day by some wealthy manufacturer, who is giving his 'hands' a day's pleasure-sailing. They left Glasgow at seven or eight o'clock: they will be taken probably to Arran, and there feasted to a moderate extent; and at dusk they will be landed at the Broomielaw again. We lament to say that very many Scotch people of the working class seem incapable of enjoying a holiday without getting drunk and uproarious. We do not speak from hearsay, but from what we have ourselves seen. Once or twice we found ourselves on board a steamer crowded with a most disagreeable mob of intoxicated persons, among whom, we grieve to say, we saw many women. The authorities of the vessel appeared entirely to lack both the power and the will to save respectable passengers from the insolence of the 'roughs.' The Highland fling may be a very picturesque and national dance, but when executed on a crowded deck by a maniacal individual, with puffy face and blood-shot eyes, swearing, yelling, dashing up against peaceable people, and mortally drunk, we should think it should be matter less of æsthetical than of police consideration. Un

less the owners of the Clyde steamers wish to drive all decent persons from their boats, they must take vigorous steps to repress such scandalous goings-on as we have witnessed more than once or twice. And we also take the liberty to suggest that the infusion of a little civility into the manner and conversation of some of the steam-boat officials on the quay at Greenock, would be very agreeable to passengers, and could not seriously injure those individuals themselves.

What sort of men are the Glasgow merchants? Why, courteous reader, there are great diversities among them. Almost all we have met give us an impression of shrewdness and strong sense; some, of extraordinary tact and cleverness — though these last are by no means among the richest men. In some cases we found extremely unaffected and pleasing address, great information upon general topics — in short, all the characteristics of the cultivated gentleman. In others there certainly was a good deal of boorishness; and in one or two instances, a tendency to the use of oaths which in this country have long been unknown in good society. The reputed wealth of some Glasgow men is enormous, though we think it not unlikely that there is a great deal of exaggeration as to that subject. We did, however, hear it said that one firm of iron merchants realized for some time profits to the extent of nearly four hundred thousand a-year. We were told of an individual who died worth a million, all the produce of his own industry and skill; and one hears incidentally of such things as five-hundred-pound bracelets, thousand-guinea necklaces, and other appliances of extreme luxury, as not unknown among the fair dames of Glasgow.

And so, in idle occupations, and in gleaning up par-

ticulars as to Glasgow matters according to our taste wherever we go, our sojourn upon the Frith of Clyde pleasantly passed away. We left our hospitable friends, not without a promise that when the Christmas holidays come we should visit them once more, and see what kind of thing is the town life of the winter time in that warm-hearted city. And meanwhile, as the days shorten to chill November, — as the clouds of London smoke drift by our windows, — as the Thames runs muddy through this mighty hum and bustle away to the solitudes of its last level, — we recall that cheerful time with a most agreeable recollection of the kindness of Glasgow friends, — and of all that is implied in *Glasgow Down the Water*.



CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING MAN AND HIS DWELLING-PLACE

WHEN my friend Smith's drag comes round to his door, as he and I are standing on the steps ready to go out for a drive, how cheerful and frisky the horses look! I think I see them, as I saw them yesterday, coming round from the stable-yard, with their glossy coats and the silver of their harness glancing in the May sunshine, the May sunshine mellowed somewhat by the green reflection of two great leafy trees. They were going out for a journey of twenty miles. They were, in fact, about to begin their day's work, and they knew they were; yet how buoyant and willing they looked! There was not the faintest appearance of any disposition to shrink from their task, as if it were a hard and painful one. No; they were eager to be at it: they were manifestly enjoying the anticipation of the brisk exertion in the midst of which they would be in five minutes longer. And by the time we have got into our places, and have wrapped those great fur robes comfortably about our limbs, the chafing animals have their heads given them; and instantly they fling themselves at their collars, and can hardly be restrained from breaking into a furious gal-

lop. Happy creatures, you enjoy your work ; you wish nothing better than to get at it !

And when I have occasionally beheld a ploughman, bricklayer, gardener, weaver, or blacksmith, begin his work in the morning, I have envied him the readiness and willingness with which he took to it. The ploughman, after he has got his horses harnessed to the plough, does not delay a minute : into the turf the shining share enters, and away go horses, plough and man. It costs the ploughman no effort to make up his mind to begin. He does not stand irresolute, as you and I in childish days have often done when taken down to the sea for our morning dip, and when trying to get courage to take the first plunge under water. And the bricklayer lifts and places the first brick of his daily task just as easily as the last one. The weaver, too, sits down without mental struggle at his loom, and sets off at once. How different is the case with most men whose work is mental ; more particularly how different is the ease with most men whose work is to write — to spin out their thoughts into compositions for other people to read or to listen to ! How such men, for the most part, shrink from their work — put it off as long as may be ; and even when the paper is spread out and the pen all right, and the ink within easy reach, how they keep back from the final plunge ! And after they have begun to write, how they dally with their subject ; shrink back as long as possible from grappling with its difficulties ; twist about and about, talking of many irrelevant matters, before they can summon up resolution to go at the real point they have got to write about ! How much unwillingness there is fairly to put the neck to the collar !

Such are my natural reflections, suggested by my per-

sonal feelings at this present time. I know perfectly well what I have got to do. I have to write some account, and attempt some appreciation, of a most original, acute, well-expressed, and altogether remarkable book — the book, to wit, which bears the comprehensive title of *Man and his Dwelling-Place*. It is a metaphysical book; it is a startling book; it is a very clever book; and though it is published anonymously, I have heard several acquaintances say, with looks expressive of unheard-of stores of recondite knowledge, that they have reason to believe that it is written by this and that author, whose name is already well known to fame. It may be so, but I did not credit it a bit the more because thus assured of it. In most cases the people who go about dropping hints of how much they know on such subjects, know nothing earthly about the matter; but still the premises (as lawyers would say) make it be felt that the book is a serious one to meddle with. Not that in treating such a volume, plainly containing the careful and deliberate views and reflections of an able and well-informed man, I should venture to assume the dignified tone of superiority peculiar to some reviewers in dissecting works which they could not have written for their lives. There are not a score of men in Britain who would be justified in reviewing such a book as this *de haut en bas*. I intend the humbler task of giving my readers some description of the work, stating its great principle, and arguing certain points with its eminently clever author; and under the circumstances in which this article is written, it discards the dignified and undefined *We*, and adopts the easier and less authoritative first person singular. The work to be done, therefore, is quite apparent: there is no doubt about *that*. But the writer is

most unwilling to begin it. Slowly was the pen taken up; oftentimes was the window looked out of. I am well aware that I shall not settle steadily to my task till I shall have had a preliminary canter, so to speak. Thus have I seen school-boys, on a warm July day, about to jump from a sea-wall into the azure depths of ocean. But after their garments were laid aside, and all was ready for the plunge, long time sat they upon the tepid stones, and paddled with idle feet in the water.

How shall I better have that preliminary and moderate exereitation which serves to get up the steam, than by talking for a little about the scene around me? Through diamond-shaped panes the sunshine falls into this little chamber; and going to the window you look down upon the tops of tall trees. And it is pleasant to look down upon the tops of tall trees. The usual way of looking at trees, it may be remarked, is from below. But this chamber is high up in the tower of a parish church far in the country. Its furniture is simple as that of the chamber of a certain prophet, who lived long ago. There are some things here, indeed, which he had not; for yesterday's *Times* lies upon the floor drying in the morning sunbeams, and *Fraser's Magazine* for May is on a chair by the window. Why does that incomparable monthly act blisteringly upon the writer's mind? It never did so till May, 1859. Why does he put it for the time out of sight? Why, but because, for once, he has read in that Magazine an article — by a very eminent man, too — written in what he thinks a thoroughly mistaken spirit, and setting out views which he thinks to be utterly false and mischievous. Not such, the writer knows well, are the views of his dear friend the Editor — not such are the doctrines which *Fraser* teaches to a

grateful world. In the latter pages of his review of *Mill on Liberty*, Mr. Buekle spoke solely for himself; he did not express the opinions which this Magazine upholds, nor commit for one moment the staff of men who write in it; and, as one insignificant individual who has penned a good many pages of *Fraser*, I beg to express my keen disapprobation of Mr. Buekle's views upon the subject of Christianity. They may be right, but I firmly believe they are wrong; they may be true, but I think them false. I repudiate any share in them: let their author bear their responsibility for himself. Alas, say I, that so able a man should sincerely think (I give him credit for entire sincerity) that man's best refuge and most precious hope is vain delusion! Very jarringly to my mind sound those eloquent periods, so inexpressibly sad and dreary, amid pages penned in many quiet parsonages, by many men who for the truth of Christianity would, God helping them, lay down their lives. So, you May magazine, get meanwhile out of sight: I don't want to think of you. Rather let me stay this impatient throbbing of heart by looking down on the green tops of those great silent trees.

Thick ivy frames this mullioned window, with its three lancet-shaped lights. Seventy feet below, the grassy graves of the churchyard swell like green waves. The white headstones gleam in the sun. Ancient oaks line the lichened wall of the churchyard: their leaves not yet so thick as they will be a month hereafter. Beyond the wall, I see a very verdant field, between two oaks; six or seven white lambs are lying there, or frisking about. The silver gleam of a river bounds the field; and beyond are thick hedges, white with hawthorn blossoms. In the distance there is a great rocky hill, which bounds the

horizon. There is not a sound, save when a little flaw of air brushes a twig against the wall some feet below me. The smoke of two or three scattered cottages rises here and there. The sky is very bright blue, with many fleecy clouds. Quiet, quiet! And all this while the omnibuses, cabs, carriages, drays, horses, men, are hurrying, sweltering, and fretting along Cheapside!

Man and his Dwelling-Place! Truly a comprehensive subject. For man's dwelling-place is the universe; and remembering this, it is plain that there is not much to be said which might not be said under that title. But, of course, there are sweeping views and opinions which include man and the universe, and which colour all beliefs as to details. And the author of this remarkable book has arrived at such a sweeping view. He holds, that whereas we fancy that we are living creatures, and that inanimate nature is inert, or without life, the truth is just the opposite of this fancy. He holds that man wants life, and that his dwelling-place possesses life. We are dead, and the world is living. No doubt it would be easy to laugh at all this; but I can promise the thoughtful reader that, though after reading the book he may still differ from its author, he will not laugh at him. Very moderately informed folk are quite aware of this — that the fact of any doctrine seeming startling at the first mention of it, is no argument whatever against its truth. Some centuries since you could hardly have startled men more than by saying that the earth moves, and the sun stands still. Nay, it is not yet forty years since practical engineers judged George Stephenson mad, for saying that a steam-engine could draw a train of carriages along a railway at the rate of fourteen miles an hour. It is certainly a startling thing to be told that I am dead, and that

the distant hill out there is living. The burden of proof rests with the man who propounds the theory; the *primâ facie* case is against him. Trees do not read newspapers; hills do not write articles. We must try to fix the author's precise meaning when he speaks of *life*; perhaps he may intend by it something quite different from that which we understand. And then we must see what he has to say in support of a doctrine which at the first glance seems nothing short of monstrous and absurd.

No: I cannot get on. I cannot forget that May magazine that is lying in the corner. I must be thoroughly done with it before I can fix my thoughts upon the work which is to be considered. Mr. Buckle has done a service to my mind, entirely analogous to that which would be done to a locomotive engine by a man who should throw a handful of sand into its polished machinery. I am prepared, from personal experience, to meet with a flat contradiction his statement that a man does you no harm by trying to cast doubt and discredit upon the doctrines you hold most dear. Mr. Buckle, by his article, has done me an injury. It is an injury, irritating but not dangerous. For the large assertions, which if they stated truths, would show that the religion of Christ is a miserable delusion, are unsupported by a tittle of proof: and the general tone in regard to Christianity, though sufficiently hostile, and very eloquently expressed, appears to me uncommonly weak in logic. But as Mr. Buckle's views have been given to the world, with whatever weight may be derived from their publication in this magazine, it is no more than just and necessary that through the same channel there should be conveyed another contributor's strong disavowal of them, and keen

protest against them. I do not intend to argue against Mr. Buckle's opinions. This is not the time or place for such an undertaking. And Mr. Buckle, in his article, has not argued but dogmatically asserted, and then called hard names at those who may conscientiously differ from him. Let me suggest to Mr. Buckle that such names can very easily be retorted. Any man who *would* use them, very easily *could*. Mr. Buckle says that any man who would punish by legal means the publication of blasphemous sentiments, should be regarded as a *noxious animal*. It is quite easy for me to say, and possibly to prove, that the man who advocates the free publication of blasphemous sentiments, is a noxious animal. So there we are placed on an equal footing; and what progress has been made in the argument of the question in debate? Then Mr. Buckle very strongly disapproves a certain judgment of, as I believe, one of the best judges who ever sat on the English Bench: I mean Mr. Justice Coleridge. That judge on one occasion sentenced to imprisonment a poor, ignorant man, convicted of having written certain blasphemous words upon a gate. I am prepared to justify every step that was taken in the prosecution and punishment of that individual. *That*, however, is not the point at issue. Even supposing that the magistrates who committed, and the judge who sentenced, that miserable wretch, had acted wrongly and unjustly, could not Mr. Buckle suppose that they had acted conscientiously? What right had he to speak of Mr. Justice Coleridge as a 'stony-hearted man?' What right had he to say that the judge and the magistrates, in doing what they honestly believed to be right, were 'criminals,' who had 'committed a great crime?' What right had he to say that their motives were 'the pride of

their power and the wickedness of their hearts?' What right had he to call one of the most admirable men in Britain 'this unjust and unrighteous judge? And where did Mr. Buckle ever see anything to match the statement, that Mr. Justice Coleridge grasped at the opportunity of persecuting a poor blasphemer in a remote county, where his own wickedness was likely to be overlooked, while he durst not have done as much in the face of the London press? Who will believe that Mr. Justice Coleridge is distinguished for his 'cold heart and shallow understanding?' But I feel much more comfortable now, when I have written upon this page that I, as one humble contributor to this Magazine, utterly repudiate Mr. Buckle's sentiments with regard to Sir J. T. Coleridge, and heartily condemn the manner in which he has expressed them.

If there be any question which ought to be debated with scrupulous calmness and fairness, it is the question whether it is just that human laws should prevent and punish the publication of views commonly regarded as blasphemous. I deny Mr. Buckle's statement, that all belief is involuntary. I say that in a country like this, every man of education is responsible for his religious belief; but of course responsible only to his Maker. Thus, on totally different grounds from Mr. Buckle, I agree with him in thinking that no human law should interfere with a man's belief. I am not prepared, without much longer thought than I have yet given to the subject, to agree with Mr. Buckle and Mr. Mill, that human law should never interfere with the publication of opinions, no matter how blasphemous they may be esteemed by the great majority of the nation to which they are published. I might probably say that I should not

interfere with the publication of any book, however false and mischievous I might regard the religious doctrines it taught, provided the book were written in the interest of truth — provided its author manifestly desired to set out doctrines which he regarded as true and important. But if the book set out blasphemous doctrine in such a tone and temper as made it evident that the writer's main intention was to irritate and distress those who held the belief regarded as orthodox, I should probably suppress or punish the publication of such a book. Sincere infidelity is a sad thing, with little of the propagandist spirit. Even if it should think that those Christian doctrines which afford so much comfort and support to men are fond delusions, I think its humane feeling would be, — Well, I shall not seek to shatter hopes which I cannot replace. I know that such was the feeling of the most amiable of unbelievers — David Hume. I know how he regularly attended church, anxious that he might not by his example dash in humble minds the belief which tended to make them good and happy, though it was a belief which he could not share. My present notion is, that laws ought to punish coarse and abusive blasphemy. They may let thoughtful and philosophic scepticism alone. It will hardly reach, it will never distress, the masses. But if a blackguard goes up to a parsonage door, and bellows out blasphemous remarks about the Trinity ; or if a man who is a blockhead as well as a malicious wretch writes blasphemous words upon a parsonage gate, I cannot for an instant recognize in these men the champions of freedom of religious thought and speech. Even Mr. Buckle cannot think that their purpose is to teach the clergymen important truth. They don't intend to proselytize. Their object is to insult and annoy and

shock. And I think it is right to punish them. They are not punished for setting out their peculiar opinions. They are punished for designedly and maliciously injuring their neighbours. Mr. Justice Coleridge punished the blasphemer in Cornwall, not because he held wrong views, not because he expressed wrong views. He might have expressed them in a decent way as long as he liked, and no one would have interfered with him. He was punished because, with malicious and insulting intention, he wrote blasphemous words where he thought they would cause pain and horror. He was punished for *that*: and rightly. Mr. Buckle seeks to excite sympathy for the man, by mixing up with the question whether or no his crime deserved punishment, the wholly distinct question, whether or no the man was so far sane as to deserve punishment for any crime whatever. These two questions have no connexion; and it is unfair to mingle them. The question of the man's sanity or insanity was for the jury to decide. The jury decided that he was so sane as to be responsible. Mr. Buckle's real point is, that however sane the man might have been, it was wicked to punish him; and I do not hesitate to say, for myself, that looking to the entire circumstances of the case, the magistrates who committed that nuisance of his neighbourhood, and the judge who sent him to jail, did no more than their duty.

There are several statements made by Mr. Buckle which must not be regarded as setting forth the teaching of the Magazine in which they were made. Mr. Buckle says that no man can be sure that any doctrine is divinely revealed: that whoever says so must be 'absurdly and immodestly confident in his own powers.' I deny that. Mr. Buckle says that it is part of Christian doctrine that

rich men cannot be saved. I deny that. Christ's statement as to the power of worldly possessions to concentrate the affections upon this world, went not an inch further than daily experience goes. What said Samuel Johnson when Garrick showed him his grand house?

Ah, David, these are the things that make death terrible!' Mr. Buckle says that Christianity gained ground in early ages because its doctrines were combated. They were not combated. Its professors were persecuted, which is quite another thing. Mr. Buckle says that the doctrine of Immortality was known to the world before Christianity was heard of, or any other revealed religion. I deny that. Greek and Roman philosophers of the highest class regarded that doctrine as a delusion of the vulgar. Did Mr. Buckle ever read the letter of condolence which Sulpicius wrote to Cicero after the death of Cicero's daughter? A beautiful letter, beautifully expressed; stating many flimsy and wretched reasons for drying one's tears; but containing not a hint of any hope of meeting in another world. And the same may be said of Cicero's reply. As for Mr. Buckle's argument for Immortality, I think it extremely weak and inconclusive. It certainly goes to prove, if it proves anything, that my cousin Tom, who lately was called to the bar, is quite sure to be Lord Chancellor; and that Sam Lloyd, who went up from our village last week to a merchant's counting-house in Liverpool, is safe to rival his eminent namesake in wealth. Mr. Buckle's argument is just this: that if your heart is very much set upon a thing, you are perfectly sure to get it. Of course everybody has read the soliloquy in Addison's *Cato*, where Mr. Buckle's argument is set forth. I deem it not worth a rush. Does any man's experience of this life tend to

assure him, that because some people (and not all people) would like to see their friends again after they die, therefore they shall? Do things usually turn out just as we particularly wish that they should turn out? Has not many a young girl felt, like Cato, a 'secret dread and inward horror' lest the pic-nic day should be rainy? Did *that* ensure its being fine? Was not I extremely anxious to catch the express train yesterday, and did not I miss it? Does not every child of ten years old know, that this is a world in which things have a wonderful knack of falling out just in the way least wished for? If I were an infidel, I should believe that some spiteful imp of the perverse had the guidance of the affairs of humanity. I know better than *that*: but for my knowledge I have to thank Revelation. But is it philosophical, is it common sense, in a man who rejects Revelation, and who must be guided in his opinions of a future life by the analogy of the present, to argue that because here the issue all but constantly defeats our wishes and hopes, therefore an end on which (as he says) human hearts are very much set shall certainly be attained hereafter? 'If the separation were final,' says Mr. Buckle, in a most eloquent and pathetic passage, 'how could we stand up and live?' Fine feeling, indeed, but impotent logic. When a man has worked hard and accumulated a little competence, and then in age loses it all in some swindling bank, and sees his daughters, tenderly reared, reduced to starvation, I doubt not he may think 'How can I live?' but will all this give him his fortune back again? Has not many a youthful heart, crushed down by bitter disappointment, taken up the fancy that surely life would now be impossible; but did the fancy, by the weight of a feather, affect the fact? I remember, indeed, seeing

Mr. Buckle's question put with a wider reach of meaning. Poor Uncle Tom, torn from his family, is sailing down the Mississippi, and finding comfort as he reads his well-worn Bible. How could that poor negro weigh the arguments on either side, and be sure that the blessed Faith, which was then his only support, was true? With better logic than Mr. Buckle's, he drew his best evidence from his own consciousness. 'It fitted him so well: it was so exactly what he needed. It *must* be true, or how could he live?'

Having written all this, I feel that I can now think without distraction of *Man and his Dwelling-Place*. I have mildly vented my indignation; and I now, in a moral sense, extend my hand to Mr. Buckle. Had he come up that corkscrew stair an hour or two ago, I am not entirely certain that I might not have taken him by the collar and shaken him. And had I found him standing on a chair in the green behind the church, and indoctrinating my simple parishioners with his peculiar notions, I have an entire conviction that I should have forgotten my theoretical assent to the doctrine of religious toleration, and by a gentle hint to my sturdy friends, procured him an invigorating bath in that gleaming river. I have got rid of that feeling now. And although Mr. Buckle is the last man who would find fault with any honest opposition, I yet desire to express my regret if I have written any word that passes the limit of goodnatured though sturdy conflict. I respect Mr. Buckle's earnestness and moral courage: I heartily admire his eloquence: I give him credit for entire sincerity in the opinions he holds, though I think them sadly mistaken.

So now for *Man and his Dwelling-Place*. Twice already has the writer put his mind at that book, but it

has each time swerved, like a middling hunter from a very stiff fence, and taken a circle round the field. Now at last the thing must really be done.

If you, my reader, are desirous of discovering a book which shall entirely knock up your previous views upon all possible subjects, read this *Essay Towards the Interpretation of Nature*. It does, indeed, interpret Nature, and Man too, in a fashion which, to the best of my knowledge, is thoroughly original. And the book is distinguished not more by originality than by piety, earnestness, and eloquence. Its author is an enthusiastic Christian; and indeed his peculiar views in metaphysics and science are founded upon his interpretation of certain passages in the New Testament. It is from the sacred volume that he derives his theory that man is at present dead. The work appears likely to appeal to a limited circle of readers; it will be understood and appreciated by few. Though its style is clear, the abstruseness of the subjects discussed and the transcendental scope of its author, make the train of thought often difficult to follow. Possibly the fault is not in the book, but in the reader: possibly it may result from the book having been read rapidly and while pressed by many other concerns; but there seems to me a certain want of clearness and sharpness of presentment about it. The great principle maintained is indeed set forth with unmistakable force; but, it is hard to say how, there appears in details a certain absence of method, and what in Scotland is called a *drumliness* of style. There is a good deal of repetition too; but for *that* one is rather thankful than otherwise; for the great idea of the deadness of man and the life and spirituality of nature grows much better defined and is grasped more completely and

intelligently, as we come upon it over and over again, put in many different ways and with great variety of illustration. It is a humiliating confession for a reviewer to make, but, to say the truth, I do not know what to make of this book. If its author should succeed in indoctrinating the race with his views, he will produce an intellectual revolution. Every man who thinks at all will be constrained for the remainder of his days (I must not say of his *life*) to think upon all subjects quite differently from what he has ever hitherto thought. As for readers for amusement, and for all readers who do not choose to read what cannot be read without some mental effort, they will certainly find the first half-dozen pages of this work quite sufficient for them. Without pretending to follow the author's views into the vast number of details into which they reach, I shall endeavour in a short compass to draw the great lines of them.

There is an interesting introduction, which gradually prepares us for the announcement of the startling fact that all men hitherto have been entirely mistaken in their belief both as to themselves and the universe which surrounds them. It is first impressed upon us that things may be in themselves very different indeed from that which they appear to us: that phenomenon may be something far apart from actual being. Yet though our conceptions, whether given by sense or intellect, do not correspond with the truth of things, still they are the elements from which truth is to be gathered. The following passage, which occurs near the beginning of the introduction, is the sharp end of the wedge:—

All advance in knowledge is a deliverance of man from himself. Slowly and painfully we learn that he is not the measure of truth, that the fact may be very different from the appearance to him. The les-

sol. is hat z, but the reward is great. So he escapes from illusion and error, from ignorance and failure. Directing his thoughts and energies no longer according to his own impressions, but according to the truth of things, he finds himself in possession of an unimaginable power alike of understanding and of acting. To a truly marvellous extent he is the lord of nature.

But the conditions of this lordship are inexorable. They are the surrender of prepossessions, the abandonment of assumption, the confession of ignorance: the open eye and the humble heart. Hence in all passing from error to truth we learn something respecting ourselves as well as something respecting the object of our study. Simultaneously with our better knowledge we recognize the reason of our ignorance, and perceive what defect on our part has caused us to think wrongly.

Either the world is such as it appears to us, or it is not. If it be not, there must be some condition affecting ourselves which modifies the impression we receive from it. And this condition must be operative upon all mankind: it must relate to man as a whole rather than to individual men.

Thus does the author lay down the simple general principle from which he is speedily to draw conclusions so startling. Nothing can be more innocuous than all this. Every one must agree in it. Now come the further steps.

The study of nature leads to the conclusion that there is a defectiveness in man which modifies his perception of all external things; and that thus in so far as the actual fact of the universe differs from our impression of it, the actual fact is better, higher, more complete, than our impression of it. There are qualities, there is a glory about the universe, which our defective condition prevents our seeing or discerning. The universe, or nature, is not in itself such as it is to man's feeling; and man's feeling of it differs from the fact *by defect*. All that we discern in the universe is there: and a great deal besides.

Now, we think of nature as existing in a certain way which we call *physical*. We call the world the *physical world*. This mode of existence involves *inertness*. That

which is physical does not act, except passively, as it is acted upon. Inertness is inaction. That which is inert therefore, differs from that which is not inert by *defect*. The inert *wants something* of being active.

Next, we have a conception of another mode of being besides the inert. We conceive of being which possesses a spontaneous and primary activity. This kind of being is called *spiritual*. This kind of being has shaken off the reproach of inertness. It can act, and originate action. The physical thus differs from the spiritual (as regards inertness) by defect. The physical *wants something* of being spiritual.

So far, my reader, we do not of necessity start back from anything our author teaches us. Quite true, we think of matter, a kind of being which can *do nothing* of itself. Quite true, we think of spirit, a kind of being which can *do*. And no doubt that which is able to do is (*quoad hoc*) a higher and more noble kind of being than that which cannot do, but only be done to. But remember here, I do not admit that in this point lies the *differentia* between matter and spirit. I do not grant that by taking from matter the reproach of inertness, you would make it spirit. The essential difference seems to me not to lie there. We could conceive of matter as capable of originating action, and yet as material. This is by the bye — but now be on your guard. Here is our author's great discovery —

It is man's defectiveness which makes him feel the world as thus defective. Nature is really not inert, though it appears so to man. We have been wont to think that nature, the universe, is inert or physical; that man is not-inert, or spiritual. Now, there is no doubt at all

that there is inertness somewhere. Here are the two things, Man and Nature; with which thing does the inertness lie? Our author maintains that it lies with man, not with nature. Science has proved to us that nature is not-inert. As there is inertness somewhere, and as it is not in nature, of course the conclusion is that it is in man. Inertness is in the phenomenon; that is, in nature as it appears to us. There cannot be any question that nature *seems to us* to be inert. But the author of this book declares that this inertness, though in the phenomenon, is not in the fact. Nature LOOKS inert; it is not-inert. How does the notion of inertness come at all, then? Now comes the very essence of the new theory; I give it in its author's words:—

The inertness is introduced by man. He perceives defect without him, only because there is defect within him.

To be inert has the same meaning as to be dead. So we speak of nature, thinking it to be inert, as 'dead matter.' To say that man introduces inertness into nature implies a deadness in him: it is to say that he wants life. This is the proposition which is affirmed. This condition which we call our life, is not the true life of man.

The Book that has had greater influence upon the world than all others, differs from all others, in affirming that man wants life, and in making that statement the basis of all that it contains respecting the past and present and future of mankind.

Science thus pays homage to the Bible. What that book has declared as if with authority, so long ago, she has at last decyphered on the page of nature. This is not man's true life.

And who is there who can doubt, looking at man as he is now, and then thinking of what he is to be in another world, that there is about him, now, great defect? There is truly much wanting which it is hoped will one day be supplied. What shall we call this lacking thing—this one thing lacking whose absence is felt in every fibre of our being? Our author chooses to call it life;

I am doubtful with how much felicity or naturalness of expression. Of course we all know that in the New Testament *life* does not mean merely existence continued; *eternal life* does not mean merely existence continued for ever: it means the highest and purest form of our being continued for ever;—happiness and holiness continued for ever. We know, too, that holy Scripture describes the step taken by any man in becoming an earnest believer in Christ, as ‘passing from death to life;’ we remember such a text as ‘This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.’ We know that a general name for the Gospel, which grasps its grand characteristics, is ‘The Word of Life;’ and that, in religious phrase, Christianity is concerned with the revealing, the implanting, the sustaining, the crowning, of a certain better life. Nor is it difficult to trace out such analogies between natural and spiritual death, between natural and spiritual life, as tend to prove that spiritual life and death are not spoken of in Scripture merely as the strongest words which could be employed, but that there is a further and deeper meaning in their constant use. But I do not see any gain in forcing figurative language into a literal use. Everybody knows what *life* and *death*, in ordinary language, imply. Life means sensibility, consciousness, capacity of acting, union with the living. Death means senselessness, helplessness, separation. No doubt we may trace analogies, very close and real, between the natural and the spiritual life and death. But still they are no more than analogies. You do not identify the physical with the spiritual. And it is felt by all that the use of the words in a spiritual sense is a figurative use. To the common understanding, a man is liv-

ing, when he breathes and feels and moves. He is dead when he ceases to do all that. And it is a mere twisting of words from their understood sense to say that in reality, and without a figure, a breathing, feeling, moving man is *dead*, because he lacks some spiritual quality, however great its value may be. It may be a very valuable quality ; it may be worth more than life ; but it is not life, as men understand it ; and as words have no meaning at all except that which men agree to give these arbitrary sounds, it matters not at all that this higher quality is what you may call true life, better life, real life. If you enlarge the meaning of the word *life* to include, in addition to what is generally understood by it, a higher power of spiritual action and discernment, why, all that can be said is, that you understand by *life* something quite different from men in general. If I choose to enlarge the meaning of the word *black* to include *white*, of course I might say with truth (relatively to myself) that white forms the usual clothing of clergymen. If I extend the meaning of the word *fast* to include *slow*, I might boldly declare that the Great Northern express is a slow train. And the entire result of such use of language would be, that no mortal would understand what I meant.

Thus it is that I demur to any author's right to tell me that such and such a thing is, or is not, 'the true life of man.' And when he says 'that man wants life, means that the true life of man is of another kind from this,' I reply to him, Tell me what is the blessing man needs ; Tell me, above all, where and how he is to get it : but as to its name, I really do not care what you call it, so you call it by some name that people will understand. Call it so that people will know what you mean — Salvation,

Glory, Happiness, Holiness, Redemption, or what else you please. Do not mystify us by saying we *want life*, and then, when we are startled by the perfectly intelligible assertion, edge off by explaining that by *life* you mean something quite different from what we do. There is no good in *that*. If I were to declare that this evening, before I sleep, I shall cross the Atlantic and go to America, my readers would think the statement a sufficiently extraordinary one; but if, after thus surprising them, I went on to explain that by the Atlantic I did not mean the ocean, nor by America the western continent, but that the Atlantic meant the village green, and America the squire's house on the other side of it, I should justly gain credit for a very silly mystification. As Nicholas Nickleby very justly remarked, If Dotheboy's Hall is not a hall, why call it one? Mr. Squeers, in his reply, no doubt stated the law of the ease: If a man chooses to call his house an island, what is to hinder him? If the author of *Man and his Dwelling-Place* means to tell us only that we want some spiritual capacity, which it pleases him to call life, but which not one man in a million understands by that word, is he not amusing himself at our expense by telling us we *want life*? We know what we mean by being dead: our author means something quite different. Let him speak for himself:

That man wants life means that the true life of man is of another kind from this. It corresponds to that true, absolute Being which he as he now is cannot know.

He cannot know it because he is out of relation with it. THIS IS HIS DEADNESS. To know it is to have life.

Yes, reader — *this is his deadness!* Something, that is, which no plain mortal would ever understand by the

word. When I told you, a long time ago, that this book taught that man is dead and nature living, was *this* what the words conveyed to you?

Still, though there may be something not natural in the word, the author's meaning is a broad and explicit one. For the want of *that* which he calls our true life (he maintains) utterly distorts and deforms this world to our view. Here is his statement as to the things which surround us :

There is not a physical world and a spiritual world besides; but the spiritual world which alone is physical to man, *the physical being the mode in which man, by his defectiveness, perceives the spiritual.* We feel a physical world to be: that which is is the spiritual world.

The phenomenon, that is, is physical: the fact is spiritual. A tree looks to us material, because we want life: if we had life, we should see that it is spiritual. Really, there is no such thing as matter. Our own defectiveness makes us fancy that to be material which in truth is spiritual. So I was misinterpreting the author, when I said that all that we see in nature is there, and a great deal more. The defect in us, it appears, not only subtracts from nature, it transforms it. Not merely do we fail to discern that which is in nature, we do actually discern that which is not in nature.

And to be delivered from all this deadness and delusion, what we have to do is to betake ourselves to the Saviour. Christianity is a system which starts from the fundamental principle that man is dead, and proposes to make him alive. Under its working man gains true life, otherwise called eternal life; and in gaining that life he finds himself *ipso facto* conveyed into a spiritual world. This world ceases to be physical to him, and becomes spiritual.

Such are the great lines of the new theory as to Man and his Dwelling-Place. Thus does our author interpret Nature. I trust and believe that I have not in any way misrepresented or caricatured his opinions. His *Introduction* sets out in outline the purport of the entire book. The remainder of the volume is given to carrying out these opinions into detail, as they are suggested by or as they affect the entire system of things. It is divided into four *Books*. Book I. treats *Of Science*; Book II. *Of Philosophy*; Book III. *Of Religion*; Book IV. *Of Ethics*; and the volume is closed by four *Dialogues* between the *Writer* and *Reader*, in which, in a desultory manner, the principles already set forth are further explained and enforced.

Early in the first chapter of the Book *Of Science*, the author anticipates the obvious objection to his use of the terms *Life* and *Death*. I do not think he succeeds in justifying the fashion in which he employs them. But let him speak for himself:

It may seem unnatural to speak of a conscious existence as a state of death. But what is affirmed is, that a sensational existence such as ours is not the life of MAN; that a consciousness of physical life does itself imply a deadness. The affirmations that we are living men, and that man has not true and absolute life, are not opposed. Life is a relative term. Our possession of a conscious life in relation to the things that we feel around us, is itself the evidence of man's defect of life in a higher and truer sense.

Let a similitude make the thought more clear. Are not we, as individuals, at rest, steadfast in space; evidently so to our own consciousness, demonstrably so in relation to the objects around us? But is man at rest in space? By no means. We are all partakers of a motion. Nay, if we were truly at rest, we could not have this relative steadfastness, we should not be at rest to the things around us: they would fleet and slip away. Our relative rest, and consciousness of steadfastness, depend upon our being not at rest. There are moving things, to which he only can be steadfast who is moving too. Even such is the life of which we have consciousness. We have a life in

relation to these physical things, because man wants life. True life in man would alter his relation to them. They could not be the realities any more: he could not have a life in them. As rest to moving things is not truly rest, but motion; so life to inert things is not truly life, but deadness.

Very ingeniously thought out: very skilfully put, with probably the only illustration which would go on all fours. But to me all this is extremely unsatisfactory: and unsatisfactory in a much farther sense than merely that it is using terms in a non-natural sense. I know, of course, that to look at Nature through blue spectacles will make Nature blue: but I cannot see that to look at Nature through dead eyes should make Nature dead. I see no proof that Nature, in fact, is living and active, though it admittedly looks inert and dead. And I can discover nothing more than a daring assertion, in the statement that we are dead, and that we project our own deadness upon living nature. I cannot see how to the purest and most elevated of beings, a tree should look less solid than it does to me. I cannot discover how greater purity of heart, and more entire faith in Christ, should turn this material world into a world of spirit. I doubt the doctrine that spirit in itself, as usually understood (apart from its power of originating action) is a higher and holier existence than matter. It seems to me that very much from a wrong idea that it is, come those vague, unreal, intangible notions as to the Christian Heaven, which do so much to make it a chilly, unattractive thing, to human wishes and hopes. It is hard enough for us to feel the reality of the things beyond the grave, without having the additional stumbling-block cast in our way, of being told that truly there is nothing real there for us to feel. As for the following eloquent passage, in which our author subsequently returns to the justification

of his great doctrine, no more need be said than that it is rhetoric, not logic: —

That man has not his true life, must have taken him long to learn. All our prepossessions, all our natural convictions, are opposed to that belief. If these activities, these powers, these capacities of enjoyment and suffering, this consciousness of free will, this command of the material world, be not life, what is life? What more do we want to make us truly man? This is the feeling that has held men captive, and biased all their thoughts so that they could not perceive what they themselves were saying.

Yet the sad undercurrent has belied the boast. From all ages and all lands the cry of anguish, the prayer for life unconscious of itself, has gone up to heaven. In groans and curses, in despair and cruel rage, man pours out his secret to the universe; writing it in blood, and lust, and savage wrong, upon the fair bosom of the earth; he alone not knowing what he does. If this be the life of man, what is his leath?

No doubt this would form a very eloquent and effective paragraph in a popular sermon. But in a philosophic treatise, where an author is tied to the severely precise use of terms, and where it will not do to call a thing death merely because it is very bad, nor to call a thing life merely because it is very good, the argument appears to have but little weight.

You must see, intelligent reader, that one thing which we are entitled to require our author to satisfactorily prove, is the fact that Nature is not inert, as it appears to man. If you can make it certain that Nature is living and active, then, no doubt, some explanation will be needful as to how it comes to look so different to us; though, even then, I do not see that it necessarily follows that the inertness is to be supposed to exist in ourselves. But unless the author can prove that Nature is not inert, he has no foundation to build on. He states

three arguments, from which he derives the grand principle : —

1. Inertness necessarily belongs to all phenomena. That which is only *felt* to be, and does not truly or absolutely exist, must have the character of inaction. It must be felt as passive. A phenomenon must be inert *because it is a phenomenon*. We cannot argue from inertness in that which appears to us, to inertness in that which is. Of whatsoever kind the essence of nature may be, if it be unknown, the phenomenon must be equally inert. We have no ground, therefore, in the inertness which we feel, for affirming of nature that it *is* inert. We must feel it so, by virtue of our known relation to it, as not perceiving its essence.

2. The question, therefore, rests entirely upon its own evidence. Since we have no reason, from the inertness of the phenomenal, for inferring the inertness of the essential, can we know whether that essential be inert or not? We can know. Inertness, as being absolute inaction, cannot belong to that which truly is. Being and absolute inaction are contraries. Inertness, therefore, must be a property by which the phenomenal differs from the essential or absolute.

3. Again, nature does act: it acts upon us, or we could not perceive it at all. The true being of nature is active therefore. That we feel it otherwise shows that we do not feel it as it is. We must look for the source of nature's apparent or felt inertness in man's condition. Never should man have thought to judge of nature without remembering his own defectiveness.

Such are the grounds upon which rests the belief, that nature is not inert. It appears to me that there is little force in them. To a great extent they are mere assumptions and assertions; and anything they contain in the nature of argument is easily answered.

First: Why must every phenomenon be felt as inert? Why must a '*phenomenon be inert because it is a phenomenon?*' I cannot see why. We know nothing but phenomena; that is, things as they appear to us. Where did we get the ideas of life and activity, if not from phenomena? Many things *appear to us* to have life and activity. That is, there are phenomena which are not inert.

Secondly : Wherefore should we conclude that the phenomenon differs essentially from the fact ? The phenomenon is the fact-as-discerned-by-us. And granting that our defectiveness forbids our having a full and complete discernment of the fact, why should we doubt that our discernment is right *so far as it goes* ? It is incomparably more likely that things (not individual things, but the entire system, I mean) *are* what they *seem*, than that they *are not*. Why believe that we are gratuitously and needlessly deluded ? God made the universe ; he placed us in it ; he gave us powers whereby to discern it. Is it reasonable to think that he did so in a fashion so blundering or so deceitful that we can only discern it wrong ? And if nature *seems* inert, is not the rational conclusion that it *is* so ?

Thirdly : Why cannot ‘inertness, as being absolute inaction, belong to that which truly is ?’ Why cannot a thing *exist* without *doing* anything ? Is not *that* just what millions of things actually do ? Or if you intend to twist the meaning of the substantive verb, and to say that merely to *be* is to do something, — that simply to exist is a certain form of exertion and action, — I shall grant, of course, that nothing whatever that exists is in that sense inert ; but I shall affirm that you use the word *inert* in quite a different sense from the usual one. And in that extreme and non-natural sense of the word, the phenomenon is no more inert than is the essence. Certainly things *seem to us to be* : and if just to *be* is to *be active*, then no phenomenon is inert ; no single thing discerned by us appears to be inert.

Fourthly : I grant that ‘nature does act upon us, or we could not perceive it at all.’ But then I maintain that this kind of action is not action as men understand the

word. This kind of action is quite consistent with the general notion of inertness. A thing may be inert, as mankind understand the word; and also active, as the author of this book understands the word. To discern this sort of activity and life in nature we have no need to 'pass from death to life' ourselves. We simply need to have the thing pointed out to us, and it is seen at once. It is playing with words to say that *nature acts upon us, or we could not perceive it*. No doubt, when you stand before a tree, and look at it, it does act in so far as that it depicts itself upon your retina; but that action is quite consistent with what we understand by inertness. It does not matter whether you say that your eye takes hold of the tree, or that the tree takes hold of your eye. When you hook a trout, you may say either that you catch the fish, or that the fish catches you. Is the alternative worth fighting about? Which is the natural way of speaking: to say that the man *sees the tree*, or that *the tree shows itself* to the man? All the activity which our author claims for nature goes no farther than that. Our reply is that *that* is not activity at all. If that is all he contends for, we grant it at once; and we say that it is not in the faintest degree inconsistent with the fact of nature's being inert, as that word is understood. You come and tell me that Mr. Smith has just passed your window *flying*. I say no; I saw him; he was not flying, but walking. Ah, you reply, I hold that walking is an inchoate flying; it is a rudimentary flying, the lowest form of flying; and therefore I maintain that he flew past the window. My friend, I answer, if it be any satisfaction to you to use words in that way, do so and rejoice; only do not expect any human being to understand what you mean; and beware of the lunatic asylum.

Why, I ask again, are we to cry down man for the sake of crying up nature? Why are we to depreciate the dweller that we may magnify the dwelling-place? Is not man (to say the least) *one* of the works of God? Did not God make both man and nature? And does not Revelation (which our author holds in so deep reverence) teach that man was the last and noblest of the handiworks of the Creator? And thus it is that I do not hesitate to answer such a question as that which follows, and to answer it contrariwise to what the author expects. It is from the human soul that glory and meaning are projected upon inanimate nature. To Newton, and to Newton's dog, the outward creation was physically the same; to the apprehension of Newton and of Newton's dog, how different! Hear the author:—

To this clear issue the case is brought: Man does introduce into nature something from himself: either the inertness, the negative quality, the defect, or the beauty, the meaning, the glory. Either that whereby the world is noble comes from ourselves, or that whereby it is mean; that which it has, or that which it wants. Can it be doubtful which it is?

Not in the least! Give me the rational and immortal man, made in God's image, rather than the grandest oak which the June sunbeams will be warming when you read this, my friend—rather than the most majestic mountain which by and bye will be purple with the heather. Reason, immortality, love, and faith, are things liker God than ever so many cubic feet of granite, than ever so many loads of timber. 'Behold,' says Archer Butcher, 'we stand alone in the universe! Earth, air and ocean can show us nothing so awful as we!'

You fancy, says our author, that Nature is inert, be-

cause it goes on in so constant and unvarying a course. You know, says he, what conscious exertion it costs you to produce physical changes; you can trace no such exertion in Nature. You would believe, says he, that Nature is active, but for the fact that her doings are all conformed to laws that you can trace. But invariableness, he maintains, is no proof of inaction. **RIGHT ACTION** is invariable; **RIGHT ACTION** is absolutely conformed to law. Why, therefore, should not the secret of nature's invariableness be, not passiveness, but rightness?' The unchanging uniformity of Nature's course proves her holiness — her willing, unvarying obedience to the Divine law. 'The invariableness of Nature bespeaks Holiness as its cause.'

May we not think upon all this (not dogmatically) in some such fashion as this?

Which is likelier:

1. That Nature has it in her power to vary from the well-known laws of Nature; that she could disobey God if she pleased; but that she is so holy that she could not think of such a thing, and so through all ages has never swerved once. Or,

2. That Nature is bound by laws which she has not the power to disobey; that she is what she looks, an inanimate, passive, inert thing, actuated, as her soul and will, by the will of the Creator?

And to aid in considering which alternative is the likelier, let it be remembered that Revelation teaches that this is a fallen world; that experience proves that this world is not managed upon any system of optimism; that in this creation things are constantly going wrong; and especially, that all history gives no account of any mere creature whose will was free to do either good or

ill; and yet who did not do ill frequently. Is it likely that to all this there is one entire exception; one thing and that so large a thing as all inanimate nature, perfectly obedient, perfectly holy, perfectly right—and all by its own free will? I grant there is something touching in the author's eloquent words:—

Because she is right, Nature is ours: more truly ours than we ourselves. We turn from the inward ruin to the outward glory, and marvel at the contrast. But we need not marvel: it is the difference of life and death: piercing the dimness even of man's darkened sense, jarring upon his fond illusion like waking realities upon a dream. Without is living holiness, within is deathly wrong.

Let the reader, ever remembering that in such cases analogy is not argument but illustration—that it makes a doctrine clearer, but does not in any degree confirm it—read the chapter entitled 'Of the illustration from Astronomy.' It will tend to make the great doctrine of *Man and his Dwelling-Place* comprehensible; you will see exactly what it is, although you may not think it true. As astronomy has transferred the apparent movements of the planets from them to ourselves, so, says our author, has science transferred the seeming inertness of Nature from it to us. The phenomenon of Nature is physical and inert: the being is spiritual and active and holy. And if we now seem to have an insuperable conviction that Man is not inert and that Nature is inert, it is not stronger than our apparent consciousness that the earth is unmoving. Man lives under illusion as to himself and as to the universe. Reason, indeed, furnishes him with the means of correcting that illusion; but in that illusion is his want of life.

Strong in his conviction of the grand principle which he has established, as he conceives, in his first book, the

author, in his second book, goes crashing through all systems of philosophy. His great doctrine makes havock of them all. All are wrong; though each may have some grain of truth in it. The Idealists are right in so far as that there is no such thing as Matter. Matter is the vain imagination of man through his wrong idea of Nature's inertness. But the Idealists are wrong if they fancy that because there is no Matter, there is nothing but Mind, and ideas in Mind. Nature, though spiritual, has a most real and separate existence. Then the sceptics are right in so far as they doubt what our author thinks wrong; but they are wrong in so far as they doubt what our author thinks right. Positivism is right in so far as it teaches that we see all things relatively to ourselves, and so wrongly; but it is wrong in teaching that what things are in themselves is no concern of ours, and that we should live on as though things were what they seem.

If it were not that the reader of *Man and his Dwelling-Place* is likely, after the shock of the first grand theory, that Man is dead and the Universe living, to receive with comparative coolness any further views set out in the book, however strange, I should say that probably, the third Book, 'Of Religion,' would startle him more than anything else in the work. Although this Book stands third in the volume, it is first both in importance and in chronology. For the author tells us that his views *Of Religion* are not deduced from the theoretical conceptions already stated, but have been drawn immediately from the study of Scripture, and that from them the philosophical ideas are mainly derived. And indeed it is perfectly marvellous what doctrines men will find in Scripture, or deduce from Scripture. Is there not

something curious in the capacity of the human mind, while glancing along the sacred volume, to find upon its pages both what suits its prevailing mood and its firm conviction at the time? You feel buoyant and cheerful; you open your Bible and read it; what a cheerful, hopeful book it is! You are depressed and anxious: you open your Bible; surely it was written for people in your present frame of mind! It is wonderful to what a degree the Psalms especially suit the mood and temper of all kinds of readers in every conceivable position. I can imagine the poor suicide, stealing towards the peaceful river, and musing on a verse of a psalm. I can imagine the joyful man, on the morning of a marriage day which no malignant relatives have embittered, finding a verse which will seem like the echo of his cheerful temper. And passing from feeling to understanding, it is remarkable how, when a man is possessed with any strong belief, he will find, as he reads the Bible, not only many things which appear to him expressly to confirm his view, but something in the entire tenor of what he reads that appears to harmonize with it. I doubt not the author of *Man and his Dwelling-Place* can hardly open the Bible at random without chancing upon some passage which he regards as confirmatory of his opinions. I am quite sure that to ordinary men his opinions will appear flatly to conflict with the Bible's fundamental teaching. It has already been indicated in this essay in what sense the statements of the New Testament to the following effect are to be understood:—

The writers of the New Testament declare man to be dead. They speak of men as not having life, and tell of a life to be given them. If, therefore, our thoughts were truly conformed to the New Testament, how could it seem a strange thing to us that this state of man should be found a state of death; how should its very words, read

Armed by science, excite our surprise? Would it not have appeared to us a natural result of the study of nature to prove man dead? Might we not, if we had truly accepted the words of Scripture, have anticipated that it should be so? For, if man be rightly called dead, should not that condition have affected his experience, and ought not a discovery of that fact to be the issue of his labours to ascertain his true relation to the universe? Why does it seem a thing incredible to us that man should be really, actually dead: dead in such a sense as truly to affect his being, and determine his whole state? Why have we been using words which affirm him dead in our religious speech, and feel startled at finding them proved true in another sphere of inquiry?

It is indeed true — it is a thing to be taken as a fundamental truth in reading the Bible — that in a certain sense man is dead, and is to be made alive; and the analogy which obtains between natural death and what in theological language is called spiritual death, is in several respects so close and accurate that we feel that it is something more than a strong figure when the New Testament says such things as ‘You hath he quickened who were *dead* in trespasses and sins.’ But it tends only to confusion to seek to identify things so thoroughly different as natural and spiritual death. It is trifling with a man to say to him ‘You are dead!’ and having thus startled him, to go on to explain that you mean spiritually dead. ‘Oh,’ he will reply, ‘I grant you that I may be dead in that sense, and possibly that is the more important sense, but it is not the sense in which words are commonly understood.’ I can see, of course, various points of analogy between ordinary death and spiritual death. Does ordinary death render a man insensible to the presence of material things? Then spiritual death renders him heedless of spiritual realities, of the presence of God, of the value of salvation, of the closeness of eternity. Does natural death appear in

utter helplessness and powerlessness? So does spiritual death render a man incapable of spiritual action and exertion. Has natural death its essence in the entire separation it makes between dead and living? So has spiritual death its essence in the separation of the soul from God. But, after all, these things do but show an analogy between natural death and spiritual: they do not show that the things are one; they do not show that in the strict unfigurative use of terms man's spiritual condition is one of death. They show that man's spiritual condition is *very like death*; that is all. It is so like as quite to justify the assertion in Scripture: it is not so identical as to justify the introduction of a new philosophical phrase. It is perfectly true that Christianity is described in Scripture as a means for bringing men *from death to life*; but it is also described, with equal meaning, as a means for bringing men *from darkness to light*. And it is easy to trace the analogy between man's spiritual condition and the condition of one in darkness — between man's redeemed condition and the condition of one in light; but surely it would be childish to announce, as a philosophical discovery, that all men are blind, because they cannot see their true interests and the things that most concern them. They are not blind in the ordinary sense, though they may be blind in a higher; neither are they dead in the ordinary sense, though they may be in a higher. And only confusion, and a sense of being misled and trifled with, can follow from the pushing figure into fact and trying to identify the two.

Stripping our author's views of the unusual phraseology in which they are disguised, they do, so far as regards the essential fact of man's loss and redemption, coincide exactly with the orthodox teaching of the Church of

England. Man is by nature and sinfulness in a spiritual sense dead; dead now, and doomed to a worse death hereafter. By believing in Christ he at once obtains some share of a better spiritual life, and the hope of a future life which shall be perfectly holy and happy. Surely this is no new discovery. It is the type of Christianity implied in the Liturgy of the Church, and weekly set out from her thousands of pulpits. The startling novelties of *Man and his Dwelling-Place* are in matters of detail. He holds that fearful thing, *Damnation*, which orthodox views push off into a future world, to be a present thing. It is now men are damned. It is now men are in hell. Wicked men are now in a state of damnation: they are now in hell. The common error arises from our thinking damnation a state of suffering. It is not. It is a state of something worse than suffering, viz., of sin:—

We find it hard to believe that damnation can be a thing men like. But does not what every being likes depend on what it is? Is corruption less corruption, in man's view, because worms like it? Is damnation less damnation, in God's view, because men like it? And God's view is simply the truth. Surely one object of a revelation must be to show us things from God's view of them, that is, as they truly are. Sin truly is damnation, though to us it is pleasure. That sin is pleasure to us, surely is the evil part of our condition.

And indeed it is to be admitted that there is a great and much-forgotten truth implied here. It is a very poor, and low, and inadequate idea of Christianity, to think of it merely as something which saves from suffering—as something which saves us from hell, regarded merely as a place of misery. The Christian salvation is mainly a deliverance from sin. The deliverance is primarily from moral evil; and only secondarily from physical or moral pain. 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus,

for He shall save His people *from their sins*. No doubt this is very commonly forgotten. No doubt the vulgar idea of salvation and perdition founds on the vulgar belief that pain is the worst of all things, and happiness the best of all things. It is well that the coarse and selfish type of religion which founds on the mere desire to escape from burning and to lay hold of bliss, should be corrected by the diligent instilling of the belief, that sin is worse than sorrow. The Saviour's compassion, though ever ready to well out at the sight of suffering, went forth most warmly at the sight of sin.

Here I close the book, not because there is not much more in it that well deserves notice, but because I hope that what has here been said of it will induce the thoughtful reader to study it for himself, and because I have space to write no more. It is a May afternoon; *not* that on which the earliest pages of my article were written, but a week after it. I have gone at the ox-fence at last, and got over it with several contusions. Pardon me, unknown author, much admired for your ingenuity, your earnestness, your originality, your eloquence, if I have written with some show of lightness concerning your grave book. Very far, if you could know it, was any reality of lightness from your reviewer's feeling. He is *non ignarus mali*: he has had his full allotment of anxiety and care; and he hails with you the prospect of a day when human nature shall cast off its load of death, and when sinful and sorrowful man shall be brought into a beautiful conformity to external nature. Would that *Man* were worthy of *his Dwelling-place* as it looks upon this summer-like day! Open, you latticed window: let the cool breeze come into this somewhat feverish room. Again, the tree-tops; again

the white stones and green graves ; again the lambs, somewhat larger ; again the distant hill. Again I think of Cheapside, far away. Yet there is trouble here. Not a yard of any of those hedges but has worried its owner in watching that it be kept tight, that sheep or cattle may not break through. Not a gate I see but serewed a few shillings out of the anxious farmer's pocket, and is always going wrong. Not a field but either the landlord squeezed the tenant in the matter of rent, or the tenant cheated the landlord. Not the smoke of a cottage but marks where pass lives weighted down with constant care, and with little end save the sore struggle to keep the wolf from the door. Not one of these graves, save perhaps the poor friendless tramp's in the corner, but was opened and closed to the saddening of certain hearts. Here are lives of error, sleepless nights, over-driven brains ; wayward children, unnatural parents, though of these last, God be thanked, very few. Yes, says Adam Bede, ' there's a sort of wrong that can never be made up for.' No doubt we are dead : when shall we be quickened to a better life ? Surely, as it is, the world is too good for man. And I agree, most cordially and entirely, with the author of this book, that there is but one agency in the universe that **can** repress evil here, and extinguish it hereafter.



CHAPTER X.

LIFE AT THE WATER CURE.*

ALL our readers, of course, have heard of the Water Cure; and many of them, we doubt not, have in their own minds ranked it among those eccentric medical systems which now and then spring up, are much talked of for a while, and finally sink into oblivion. The mention of the Water Cure is suggestive of galvanism, homœopathy, mesmerism, the grape cure, the bread cure, the mud-bath cure, and of the views of that gentleman who maintained that almost all the evils, physical and moral, which assail the constitution of man, are the result of the use of salt as an article of food, and may be avoided by ceasing to employ that poisonous and immoral ingredient. Perhaps there is a still more unlucky association with life pills, universal vegetable medicines, and the other appliances of that coarser quackery which yearly brings hundreds of gulli-

* *A Month at Malvern, under the Water Cure.* By R. J. Lane, A. E. R. A. Third Edition. Reconsidered — Rewritten. London: John Mitchell. 1855.

Spirits and Water. By R. J. L. London: John Mitchell. 1855.

Confessions of a Water-Patient. By Sir E. B. Lytton, Bart.

Hints to the Sick, the Lame, and the Lazy: or, Passages in the Life of a Hydropathist. By a Veteran. London: John Ollivier. 1848.

ble Britons to their graves, and contributes thousands of pounds in the form of stamp-duty to the revenue of this great and enlightened country.

It is a curious phase of life that is presented at a Water Cure establishment. The Water Cure system cannot be carried out satisfactorily except at an establishment prepared for the purpose. An expensive array of baths is necessary ; so are well-trained bath servants, and an experienced medical man to watch the process of cure : the mode of life does not suit the arrangements of a family, and the listlessness of mind attendant on the water-system quite unfits a man for any active employment. There must be pure country air to breathe, a plentiful supply of the best water, abundant means of taking exercise — Sir E. B. Lytton goes the length of maintaining that mountains to climb are indispensable ; — and to enjoy all these advantages one must go to a hydropathic establishment. It may be supposed that many odd people are to be met at such a place ; strong-minded women who have broken through the trammels of the Faculty, and gone to the Water Cure in spite of the warnings of their medical men, and their friends' kind predictions that they would never live to come back ; and hypochondriac men, who have tried all quack remedies in vain, and who have come despairingly to try one which, before trying it, they probably looked to as the most violent and perilous of all. And the change of life is total. You may have finished your bottle of port daily for twenty years, but at the Water Cure you must perforce practise total abstinence. For years you may never have tasted fair water, but here you will get nothing else to drink, and you will have to dispose of your seven or eight tumblers a day. You may have been accustomed to loll in bed of a morning till nine or ten

o'clock ; but here you must imitate those who would thrive, and 'rise at five : ' while the exertion is compensated by your having to bundle off to your chamber at 9.30 P. M. You may long at breakfast for your hot tea, and if a Scotchman, for your grouse pie or devilled kidneys ; but you will be obliged to make up with the simpler refreshment of bread and milk, with the accompaniment of stewed Normandy pippins. You may have been wont to spend your days in a fever of business, in a breathless hurry and worry of engagements to be met and matters to be seen to ; but after a week under the Water Cure, you will find yourself stretched listlessly upon grassy banks in the summer noon, or sauntering all day beneath the horse-chestnuts of Sudbrook, with a mind as free from business cares as if you were numbered among Tennyson's lotos-eaters, or the denizens of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*. And with God's blessing upon the pure element He has given us in such abundance, you will shortly (*testibus* Mr. Lane and Sir E. B. Lytton) experience other changes as complete, and more agreeable. You will find that the appetite which no dainty could tempt, now discovers in the simplest fare a relish unknown since childhood. You will find the broken rest and the troubled dreams which for years have made the midnight watches terrible, exchanged for the long refreshful sleep that makes one mouthful of the night. You will find the gloom and depression and anxiety which were growing your habitual temper, succeeded by a lightness of heart and buoyancy of spirit which you cannot account for, but which you thankfully enjoy. We doubt not that some of our readers, filled with terrible ideas as to the violent and perilous nature of the Water Cure, will give us credit for some strength of mind when we tell them that we have

proved for ourselves the entire mode of life ; we can assure them that there is nothing so very dreadful about it ; and we trust they may not smile at us as harmlessly monomaniacal when we say that, without going the lengths its out-and-out advocates do, we believe that in certain states of health much benefit may really be derived from the system.

Sir E. B. Lytton's eloquent *Confessions of a Water-Patient* have been before the public for some years. The *Hints to the Sick, the Lame, and the Lazy*, give us an account of the ailments and recovery of an old military officer, who, after suffering severely from gout, was quite set up by a few weeks at a hydropathic establishment at Marienberg on the Rhine ; and who, by occasional recurrence to the same remedy, is kept in such a state of preservation that, though advanced in years, he 'is able to go eight miles within two hours, and can go up hill with most young fellows.' The old gentleman's book, with its odd woodcuts, and a certain freshness and incorrectness of style — we speak grammatically — in keeping with the character of an old soldier, is readable enough. Mr. Lane's books are far from being well written ; the *Spirits and Water*, especially, is extremely poor stuff. The *Month at Malvern* is disfigured by similar faults of style ; but Mr. Lane has really something to tell us in that work : and there is a good deal of interest at once in knowing how a man who had been reduced to the last degree of debility of body and mind, was so effectually restored, that now for years he has, on occasion, proved himself equal to a forty-miles' walk among the Welsh mountains on a warm summer day ; and also in remarking the boyish exhilaration of spirits in which Mr. Lane writes, which he tells us is quite a characteristic result of 'initiation into the excitements of the Water Cure.'

Mr. Lane seems to have been in a very bad way. He gives an appalling account of the medical treatment under which he had suffered for nearly thirty years. In spite of it all he found, at the age of forty-five, that his entire system was showing signs of breaking up. He was suffering from neuralgia, which we believe means something like *tic-douloureux* extending over the whole body; he was threatened with paralysis, which had advanced so far as to have benumbed his right side; his memory was going; his mind was weakened; he was, in his own words, 'no use to anybody:' there were deep cracks round the edge of his tongue; his throat was ulcerated; in short, he was in a shocking state, and never likely to be better. Like many people in such sad circumstances, he had tried all other remedies before thinking of the Water Cure; he had resorted to galvanism, and so forth, but always got worse. At length, on the 13th of May, 1845, Mr. Lane betook himself to Malvern, where Dr. Wilson presides over one of the largest cold-water establishments in the kingdom. In those days there were some seventy patients in residence, but the new-comer was pleased to find that there was nothing repulsive in the appearance of any of his *confrères*, — a consideration of material importance, inasmuch as the patients breakfast, dine, and sup together. Nothing could have a more depressing effect upon any invalid, than to be constantly surrounded by a crowd of people manifestly dying, or afflicted with visible and disagreeable disease. The fact is, judging from our own experience, that the people who go to the Water Cure are for the most part not suffering from real and tangible ailments, but from maladies of a comparatively fanciful kind, — such as low spirits, shattered nerves, and lassitude, the result of overwork. And

our readers may be disposed to think, with ourselves, that the change of air and scene, the return to a simple and natural mode of life, and the breaking off from the cares and engagements of business, have quite as much to do with their restoration as the water-system, properly so called.

The situation of Malvern is well adapted to the successful use of the water system. Sir E. B. Lytton tells us that 'the air of Malvern is in itself hygeian: the water is immemorially celebrated for its purity: the landscape is a perpetual pleasure to the eye.' The neighbouring hills offer the exercise most suited to the cure: Priessnitz said 'One must have mountains:' and Dr. Wilson told Mr. Lane, in answer to a remark that the Water Cure had failed at Bath and Cheltenham, that 'no good and difficult cures can be made in low or damp situations, by swampy grounds, or near the beds of rivers.'

The morning after his arrival, Mr. Lane fairly entered upon the Water System: and his diary for the following month shows us that his time was fully occupied by baths of one sort or another, and by the needful exercise before and after these. The patient is gradually brought under the full force of hydropathy: some of the severer appliances — such as the plunge-bath after packing, and the douche — not being employed till he has been in some degree seasoned and strung up for them. A very short time sufficed to dissipate the notion that there is anything violent or alarming about the Water Cure; and to convince the patient that every part of it is positively enjoyable. There was no shock to the system: there was nothing painful: no nauseous medicines to swallow; no vile bleeding and blistering. Sitz-baths,

foot-baths, plunge-baths, douches, and wet-sheet packings, speedily began to do their work upon Mr. Lane; and what with bathing, walking, hill-climbing, eating and drinking, and making up fast friendships with some of his brethren of the Water Cure, he appears to have had a very pleasant time of it. He tells us that he found that —

The palliative and soothing effects of the water treatment are established *immediately*; and the absence of all irritation begets a lull, as instantaneous in its effects upon the frame as that experienced in shelter from the storm.

A sense of present happiness, of joyous spirits, of confidence in my proceedings, possesses me on this, the third day of my stay. I do not say that it is *reasonable* to experience this sudden accession, or that everybody is expected to attribute it to the course of treatment so recently commenced. I only say, *so it is*; and I look for a confirmation of this happy frame of mind, when supported by renewed strength of body.

To the same effect Sir E. B. Lytton :

Cares and griefs are forgotten: the sense of the present absorbs the past and future: there is a certain freshness and youth which pervade the spirits, and live upon the enjoyment of the actual hour.

And the author of the *Hints to the Sick*, &c.:

Should my readers find me prosy, I hope that they will pardon an old fellow, who looks back to his Water Cure course as one of the most delightful portions of a tolerably prosperous life.

When shall we find the subjects of the established system of medical treatment growing eloquent on the sudden accession of spirits consequent on a blister applied to the chest; the buoyancy of heart which attends the operation of six dozen leeches; the youthful gaiety which results from the 'exhibition' of a dose of castor oil? It is no small recommendation of the water system, that it makes people so jolly while under it.

But it was not merely present cheerfulness that Mr. Lane experienced : day by day his ailments were melting away. When he reached Malvern he limped painfully, and found it impossible to straighten his right leg, from a strain in the knee. In a week he 'did not know that he *had* a knee.' We are not going to follow the detail of his symptoms : suffice it to say that the distressing circumstances already mentioned gradually disappeared ; every day he felt stronger and better ; the half-paralysed side got all right again ; mind and body alike recovered their tone : the 'month at Malvern' was followed up by a course of hydropathic treatment at home, such as the exigencies of home-life will permit ; and the upshot of the whole was, that from being a wretched invalid, incapable of the least exertion, mental or physical, Mr. Lane was permanently brought to a state of health and strength, activity and cheerfulness. All this improvement he has not the least hesitation in ascribing to the virtue of the Water Cure ; and after eight or ten years' experience of the system and its results, his faith in it is stronger than ever.

In quitting Malvern, the following is his review of the sensations of the past month : —

I look back with astonishment at the temper of mind which has prevailed over the great anxieties that, heavier than my illness, had been bearing their weight upon me. Weakness of body had been chiefly oppressive, because by it I was deprived of the power of alleviating those anxieties ; and now, with all that accumulation of mental pressure, with my burden in full cry, and even gaining upon me during the space thus occupied, I have to reflect upon time passed in merriment, and attended by never-failing joyous spirits.

To the distress of mind occasioned by gathering ailments, was added the pain of banishment from home ; and yet I have been translated to a life of careless ease. Any one whose knowledge of the solid weight that I carried to this place would qualify him to estimate

the state of mind in which I left my home, might well be at a loss to appreciate the influences which had suddenly soothed and exhilarated my whole nature, until alacrity of mind and healthful gaiety became expansive, and the buoyant spirit on the surface was stretched to unbecoming mirth and lightness of heart.

So much for Mr. Lane's experience of the Water Cure. As to its power in acute disease we shall speak hereafter; but its great recommendations in all cases where the system has been broken down by overwork, are (if we are to credit its advocates) two: first, it braces up body and mind, and restores their healthy tone, in a way that nothing else can; and next, the entire operation by which all this is accomplished, is a course of physical and mental enjoyment.

But by this time we can imagine our readers asking with some impatience, *what is the Water Cure?* What is the precise nature of all those oddly-named appliances by which it produces its results? Now this is just what we are going to explain; but we have artfully and deeply sought to set out the benefits ascribed to the system before doing so, in the hope that *that* large portion of the human race which reads *Fraser* may feel the greater interest in the details which follow, when each of the individuals who compose it remembers, that these sitzes and douches are not merely the things which *set up* Sir E. B. Lytton, Mr. Lane, and our old military friend, but are the things which may some day be called on to revive his own sinking strength and his own drooping spirits. And as the treatment to which all water patients are subjected appears to be much the same, we shall best explain the nature of the various baths by describing them as we ourselves found them.

Our story is a very simple one. Some years since,

after many terms of hard College work, we found our strength completely break down. We were languid and dispirited; everything was an effort: we felt that whether study in our case had 'made the mind' or not, it had certainly accomplished the other result which *Festus* ascribes to it, and 'unmade the body.' We tried sea-bathing, cod-liver oil, and everything else that medical men prescribe to people done up by over study; but nothing did much good. Finally, we determined to throw physic to the dogs, and to try a couple of months at the Water Cure. It *does* cost an effort to make up one's mind to go there, not only because the inexperienced in the matter fancy the water system a very perilous one, but also because one's steady-going friends, on hearing of our purpose, are apt to shake their heads, — perhaps even to tap their foreheads, — to speak doubtfully of our common sense, and express a kind hope — behind our backs, especially — that we are not growing fanciful and hypochondriac, and that we may not end in writing testimonials in favour of Professor Holloway. We have already said that to have the full benefit of the Water Cure, one must go to a hydropathic establishment. There are numbers of these in Germany, and all along the Rhine; and there are several in England, which are conducted in a way more accordant with our English ideas. At Malvern we believe there are two; there is a large one at Ben Rhydding, in Yorkshire; one at Sudbrook Park, between Richmond and Ham; and another at Moor Park, near Farnham. Its vicinity to London led us to prefer the one at Sudbrook; and on a beautiful evening in the middle of May we found our way down through that garden-like country, so green and rich to our eyes, long accustomed to the colder landscapes of.

the north. Sudbrook Park is a noble place. The grounds stretch for a mile or more along Richmond Park, from which they are separated only by a wire fence; the trees are magnificent, the growth of centuries, and among them are enormous hickories, acacias, and tulip-trees; while horse-chestnuts without number make a very blaze of floral illumination through the leafy month of June. Richmond-hill, with its unrivalled views, rises from Sudbrook Park; and that *eerie*-looking Ham House, the very ideal of the old English manor-house, with its noble avenues which make twilight walks all the summer day, is within a quarter of a mile. As for the house itself, it is situated at the foot of the slope on whose summit Lord John Russell's house stands; it is of great extent, and can accommodate a host of patients, though when we were there, the number of inmates was less than twenty. It is very imposing externally; but the only striking feature of its interior is the dining-room, a noble hall of forty feet in length, breadth, and height. It is wainscoted with black oak, which some vile wretch of a water doctor *painted white*, on the ground that it darkened the room. As for the remainder of the house, it is divided into commonplace bed-rooms and sitting-rooms, and provided with bathing appliances of every conceivable kind. On arriving at a water establishment, the patient is carefully examined, chiefly to discover if anything be wrong about the heart, as certain baths would have a most injurious effect should that be so. The doctor gives his directions to the bath attendant as to the treatment to be followed, which, however, is much the same with almost all patients. The new-comer finds a long table in the dining-hall, covered with bread and milk, between six and seven in the evening

and here he makes his evening meal with some wry faces. At half-past nine p.m. he is conducted to his chamber, a bare little apartment, very plainly furnished. The bed is a narrow little thing, with no curtains of any kind. One sleeps on a mattress, which feels pretty hard at first. The jolly and contented looks of the patients had tended somewhat to reassure us; still, we had a nervous feeling that we were fairly *in for it*, and could not divest ourselves of some alarm as to the ordeal before us; so we heard the nightingale sing for many hours before we closed our eyes on that first night at Sudbrook Park.

It did not seem a minute since we had fallen asleep, when we were awakened by some one entering our room, and by a voice which said, 'I hef come tu pack yew.' It was the bath-man, William, to whose charge we had been given, and whom we soon came to like exceedingly; a most good-tempered, active, and attentive little German. We were very sleepy, and inquired as to the hour; it was five a.m. There was no help for it, so we scrambled out of bed and sat on a chair, wrapped in the bed-clothes, watching William with sleepy eyes. He spread upon our little bed a very thick and coarse double blanket; he then produced from a tub what looked like a thick twisted cable, which he proceeded to unroll. It was a sheet of coarse linen, wrung out of the coldest water. And so here was the terrible wet sheet of which we had heard so much. We shuddered with terror. William saw our trepidation, and said, benevolently,

Yew vill soon like him mosh.' He spread out the wet sheet upon the thick blanket, and told us to strip and lie down upon it. Oh! it was cold as ice! William speedily wrapped it around us. Awfully comfortless

was the first sensation. We tried to touch the cold damp thing at as few points as possible. It would not do. William relentlessly drew the blanket tight round us; every inch of our superficies felt the chill of the sheet. Then he placed above us a feather bed, cut out to fit about the head, and stretched no end of blankets over all. 'How long are we to be here?' was our inquiry. 'Fifty minutes,' said William, and disappeared. So there we were, packed in the wet sheet, stretched on our back, our hands pinioned by our sides, as incapable of moving as an Egyptian mummy in its swathes. 'What on earth shall we do,' we remember thinking, 'if a fire breaks out?' Had a robber entered and walked off with our watch and money, we must have lain and looked at him, for we could not move a finger. By the time we had thought all this, the chilly, comfortless feeling was gone; in ten minutes or less, a sensation of delicious languor stole over us: in a little longer we were fast asleep. We have had many a pack since, and we may say that the feeling is most agreeable when one keeps awake; body and mind are soothed into an indescribable tranquillity; the sensation is one of calm, solid enjoyment. In fifty minutes William returned. He removed the blankets and bed which covered us, but left us enveloped in the sheet and coarse blanket. By this time the patient is generally in a profuse perspiration. William turned us round, and made us slip out of bed upon our feet; then slightly loosing the lower part of our eclements so that we could walk with difficulty, he took us by the shoulders and guided our unsteady steps out of our chamber, along a little passage, into an apartment containing a plunge bath. The bath was about twelve feet square; its floor and sides covered

with white encaustic tiles; the water, clear as crystal against that light background, was five feet deep. In a trice we were denuded of our remaining apparel, and desired to plunge into the bath, head first. The whole thing was done in less time than it has taken to describe it: no caloric had escaped: we were steaming like a coach horse that has done its ten miles within the hour on a summer-day; and it certainly struck us that the Water Cure had some rather violent measures in its repertory. We went a step or two down the ladder, and then plunged in overhead. 'One plunge more and out,' exclaimed the faithful William; and we obeyed. We were so thoroughly heated beforehand, that we never felt the bath to be cold. On coming out, a coarse linen sheet was thrown over us, large enough to have covered half-a-dozen men, and the bath-man rubbed us, ourselves aiding in the operation, till we were all in a glow of warmth. We then dressed as fast as possible, postponing for the present the operation of shaving, drank two tumblers of cold water, and took a rapid walk round the *wilderness* (an expanse of shrubbery near the house is so called), in the crisp, fresh morning air. The sunshine was of the brightest; the dew was on the grass; everybody was early there; fresh-looking patients were walking in all directions at the rate of five miles an hour; the gardeners were astir; we heard the cheerful sound of the mower whetting his scythe; the air was filled with the freshness of the newly-cut grass, and with the fragrance of lilac and hawthorn blossom; and all this by half-past six a.m.! How we pitied the dullards that were lagging a-bed on that bright summer morning! One turn round the wilderness occupies ten minutes: we then drank two more tumblers of water,

and took a second turn of ten minutes. Two tumblers more, and another turn; and then, in a glow of health and good humour, into our chamber to dress for the day. The main supply of water is drunk before breakfast; we took six tumblers daily at that time, and did not take more than two or three additional in the remainder of the day. By eight o'clock breakfast was on the table in the large hall, where it remained till half-past nine. Bread, milk, water, and stewed pippins (cold), formed the morning meal. And didn't we polish it off! The accession of appetite is immediate.

Such is the process entitled the *Pack and Plunge*. It was the beginning of the day's proceedings during the two months we spent at Sudbrook. We believe it forms the morning treatment of almost every patient; a shallow bath after packing being substituted for the plunge in the case of the more nervous. With whatever apprehension people may have looked forward to being *packed* before having experienced the process, they generally take to it kindly after a single trial. The pack is perhaps the most popular part of the entire cold water treatment.

Mr. Lane says of it: —

What occurred during a full hour after this operation (being packed) I am not in a condition to depose, beyond the fact that the sound, sweet, soothing sleep which I enjoyed, was a matter of surprise and delight. I was detected by Mr. Bardon, who came to awake me, smiling, like a great fool, at nothing; if not at the fancies which had played about my slumbers. Of the *heat* in which I found myself I must remark, that it is as distinct from perspiration, as from the parched and throbbing glow of fever. The pores are open, and the warmth of the body is soon communicated to the sheet; until — as in this my first experience of the luxury — a breathing, steaming heat is engendered, which fills the whole of the wrappers, and is plentifully shown in the smoking state which they exhibit as they are removed.

I shall never forget the luxurious ease in which I awoke on this morning, and looked forward with pleasure to the daily repetition of what had been quoted to me by the uninitiated with disgust and shuddering.

Sir E. B. Lytton says of the pack : —

Of all the curatives adopted by hydropathists, it is unquestionably the safest — the one that can be applied without danger to the greatest variety of cases; and which, I do not hesitate to aver, can rarely, if ever, be misapplied in any case where the pulse is hard and high, and the skin dry and burning. Its theory is that of warmth and moisture, those friendliest agents to inflammatory disorders.

I have been told, or have read (says Mr. Lane), put a man into the wet sheet who had contemplated suicide, and it would turn him from his purpose. At least I will say, let me get hold of a man who has a pet enmity, who cherishes a vindictive feeling, and let me introduce him to the soothing process. I believe that his bad passion would not linger in its old quarters three days, and that after a week his leading desire would be to hold out the hand to his *late* enemy.

Of the sensation in the pack, Sir E. B. Lytton tells us : —

The momentary chill is promptly succeeded by a gradual and vivifying warmth, perfectly free from the irritation of *dry* heat; a delicious sense of ease is usually followed by a sleep more agreeable than anodynes ever produced. It seems a positive cruelty to be relieved from this magic girdle, in which pain is lulled, and fever cooled, and watchfulness lapped in slumber.

The hydropathic breakfast at Sudbrook being over, at nine o'clock we had a foot-bath. This is a very simple matter. The feet are placed in a tub of cold water, and rubbed for four or five minutes by the bath-man. The philosophy of this bath is thus explained : —

The soles of the feet and the palms of the hands are extremely sensitive, having abundance of nerves, as we find if we tickle them. If the feet are put often into *hot* water, they will become habitually *cold*, and make one more or less delicate and nervous. On the other hand, by rubbing the feet often in cold water, they will become permanently

warm. A cold foot-bath will stop a violent fit of hysterics. Cold feet show defective circulation.

At half-past ten in the forenoon we were subjected to by far the most trying agent in the water system — the often-mentioned *douche*. No patient is allowed to have the *douche* till he has been acclimated by at least a fortnight's treatment. Our readers will understand that from this hour onward we are describing not our first Sudbrook day, but a *representative day*, such as our days were when we had got into the full play of the system. The *douche* consists of a stream of water, as thick as one's arm, falling from a height of twenty-four feet. A pipe, narrowing to the end, conducts the stream for the first six feet of its fall, and gives it a somewhat slanting direction. The water falls, we need hardly say, with a tremendous rush, and is beaten to foam on the open wooden floor. There were two *douches* at Sudbrook: one, of a somewhat milder nature, being intended for the lady patients. Every one is a little nervous at first taking this bath. One cannot be too warm before having it: we always took a rapid walk of half an hour, and came up to the ordeal glowing like a furnace. The faithful William was waiting our arrival, and ushered us into a little dressing-room, where we disrobed. William then pulled a cord, which let loose the formidable torrent, and we hastened to place ourselves under it. The course is to back gradually till it falls upon the shoulders, then to sway about till every part of the back and limbs has been played upon: but great care must be taken not to let the stream fall upon the head, where its force would probably be dangerous. The patient takes this bath at first for one minute; the time is lengthened daily till it reaches four minutes, and there it stops. The sensation

is that of a violent continuous force assailing one; we are persuaded that were a man blindfolded, and so deaf as not to hear the splash of the falling stream, he could not for his life tell what was the cause of the terrible shock he was enduring. It is not in the least like the result of water: indeed it is unlike any sensation we ever experienced elsewhere. At the end of our four minutes the current ceases; we enter the dressing-room, and are rubbed as after the plunge-bath. The reaction is instantaneous: the blood is at once called to the surface. 'Red as a rose were we:' we were more than warm; we were absolutely *hot*.

Mr. Lane records some proofs of the force with which the douche falls: —

In a corner of one dressing-room is a broken chair. What does it mean? A stout lady, being alarmed at the fall from the cistern, to reduce the height, carefully placed what *was* a chair, and stood upon it. Down came the column of water — smash went the chair to bits — and down fell the poor lady prostrate. She did not douche again for a fortnight.

Last winter a man was being doused, when an icicle that had been formed in the night was dislodged by the first rush of water, and fell on his back. Bardon, seeing the bleeding, stopped the douche, but the dousee *had not felt* the blow as anything unusual. He had been doused daily, and calculated on such a force as he experienced.

Although most patients come to like the douche, it is always to be taken with caution. That it is dangerous in certain conditions of the body, there is no doubt. Sir E. B. Lytton speaks strongly on this point: —

Never let the eulogies which many will pass upon the douche tempt you to take it on the sly, unknown to your adviser. The douche is dangerous when the body is unprepared — when the heart is affected — when apoplexy may be feared.

After having doused, which process was over by eleven, we had till one o'clock without further treat-

ment. We soon came to feel that indisposition to active employment which is characteristic of the system; and these two hours were given to sauntering, generally alone, in the green avenues and country lanes about Ham and Twickenham; but as we have already said something of the charming and thoroughly English scenes which surround Sudbrook, we shall add nothing further upon that subject now—though the blossoming horse chestnuts and the sombre cedars of Richmond Park, the bright stretches of the Thames, and the quaint gateways and terraces of Ham House, the startled deer and the gorse-covered common, all picture themselves before our mind at the mention of those walks, and tempt us sorely.

At one o'clock we returned to our chamber, and had a Lead-bath. We lay upon the ground for six minutes, if we remember rightly, with the back of our head in a shallow vessel of water.

Half-past one was the dinner hour. All the patients were punctually present; those who had been longest in the house occupying the seats next those of Dr. and Mrs. Ellis, who presided at either end of the table. The dinners were plain, but abundant; and the guests brought with them noble appetites, so that it was agreed on all hands that there never was such beef or mutton as that of Sudbrook. Soup was seldom permitted: plain joints were the order of the day, and the abundant use of fresh vegetables was encouraged. Plain puddings, such as rice and sago, followed; there was plenty of water to drink. A number of men-servants waited, among whom we recognized our friend William, disguised in a white stock. The entertainment did not last long. In half an hour the ladies withdrew to their drawing-room, and the gentlemen dispersed themselves about the place once more.

Of the Malvern dinners, Mr. Lane writes as follows : —

At the head of the table, where the doctor presides, was the leg of mutton, which, I believe, is every day's head dish. I forget what Mr. Wilson dispensed, but it was something savoury of fish. I saw veal cutlets with bacon, and a companion dish; maccaroni with gravy, potatoes plain boiled, or mashed and browned, spinach, and other green vegetables. Then followed rich pudding, tapioca, and some other farinaceous ditto, rhubarb tarts, &c. So much for what I have heard of the miserable diet of water patients.

Dinner being dispatched, there came the same listless sauntering about till four o'clock, when the pack and plunge of the morning were repeated. At half-past six we had another head-bath. Immediately after it there was supper, which was a *fac simile* of breakfast. Then, more sauntering in the fading twilight, and at half-past nine we paced the long corridor leading to our chamber, and speedily were sound asleep. No midnight tossings, no troubled dreams; one long deep slumber till William appeared next morning at five, to begin the round again.

Such was our life at the Water Cure: a contrast as complete as might be to the life which preceded and followed it. Speaking for ourselves, we should say that there is a great deal of exaggeration in the accounts we have sometimes read of the restorative influence of the system. It wrought no miracle in our case. A couple of months at the sea-side would probably have produced much the same effect. We did not experience that extreme exhilaration of spirits which Mr. Lane speaks of. Perhaps the soft summer climate of Surrey, in a district rather over-wooded, wanted something of the bracing quality which dwells in the keener air of the Malvern hills. Yet the system strung us up wonderfully, and sent us

home with much improved strength and heart. And since that time, few mornings have dawned on which we have not tumbled into the cold bath on first rising, and, following the process by a vigorous rubbing with towels of extreme roughness, experienced the bracing influence of cold water alike on the body and the mind.

We must give some account of certain other baths, which have not come within our course latterly, though we have at different times tried them all. We have mentioned the *sitz-bath*; here is its nature:—

It is not disagreeable, but very odd: and exhibits the patient in by no means an elegant or dignified attitude. For this bath it is not necessary to undress, the coat only being taken off, and the shirt gathered under the waistcoat, which is buttoned upon it; and when seated in the water, which rises to the waist, a blanket is drawn round and over the shoulders. Having remained ten minutes in this condition, we dried and rubbed ourselves with coarse towels, and after ten minutes' walk, proceeded to supper with a good appetite.

The soothing and tranquillizing effect of the *sitz* is described as extraordinary:—

In sultry weather, when indolence seems the only resource, a *sitz* of ten minutes at noon will suffice to protect against the encraving effect of heat, and to rouse from listlessness and inactivity.

If two or three hours have been occupied by anxious conversation, by many visitors, or by any of the perplexities of daily occurrence, a *sitz* will effectually relieve the throbbing head, and fit one for a return (if it must be so) to the turmoil and bustle.

If an anxious letter is to be mentally weighed, or an important letter to be answered, the matter and the manner can be under no circumstances so adequately pondered as in the *sitz*. How this quickening of the faculties is engendered, and by what immediate action it is produced, I cannot explain, and invite others to test it by practice.

I have in my own experience proved the *sitz* to be cogitatory, consolatory, quiescent, refrigeratory, revivificatory, or all these together.

Thus far Mr. Lane. The *Brause-bad* is thus described by our old military friend:—

At eleven o'clock I went to the Brause-bad. This is too delightful: it requires a day or two of practice to enable the patient to enjoy it thoroughly. The water at Marienberg is all very cold, and one must never stand still for above a few seconds at a time, and must be ever employed in rubbing the parts of the body which are exposed to the silvery element. The bath is a square room, eight feet by six. The shower above consists of a treble row of holes, drilled in a metal vessel, about one foot long, and at an elevation of eight feet from the floor. There is, besides, a lateral gush of water, in bulk about equal to three ordinary pumps, which bathes the middle man. When I entered the bath, I held my hands over my head, to break the force of the water; and having thus seasoned my knowledge-box, I allowed the water to fall on my back and breast alternately, rubbing most vigorously with both hands: the allotted time for this aquatic sport is four minutes, but I frequently begged the bademeister to allow me a minute or two more. At my sortie, the bademeister threw over me the dry sheet, and he and his assistants rubbed me dry to the bone, and left me in full scarlet uniform. After this bath I took at least three glasses of water, and a most vigorous walk.

One of the least agreeable processes in the water system is being *sweated*. Mr. Lane describes his sensations as follows:—

At five o'clock I walked the executioner who was to initiate me into the sweating process. There was nothing awful in the commencement. Two dry blankets were spread upon the mattress, and I was enveloped in them as in the wet sheet, being well and closely tucked in round the neck, and the head raised on two pillows. Then came my old friend the down bed, and a counterpane.

At first I felt very comfortable, but in ten minutes the irritation of the blanket was disagreeable, and endurance was my only resource; *thought* upon other subjects out of the question. In half-an-hour I wondered when it would begin to act. At six, in came Bardon to give me water to drink. Another hour, and I was getting into a state. I had for ten minutes followed Bardon's directions by slightly moving my hands and legs, and the profuse perspiration was a relief; besides, I knew that I should be soon fit to be *bathed*, and what a tenfold treat! He gave me more water; and in a quarter of an hour he returned, when I stepped, in a precious condition, into the cold bath, Bardon using more water on my head and shoulders than usual, more rubbing and spunging, and afterwards more vigorous *dry* rubbing. I was more than pink, and hastened to get out and compare notes with Sterling.

By the sweating process, the twenty-eight miles of tubing which exist in the pores of the skin are effectually relieved; and — in Dr. Wilson's words — 'you lose a little *water*, and put yourself in a state to make *flesh*.' The sweating process is known at water establishments as the 'blanket-pack.'

We believe we have mentioned every hydropathic appliance that is in common use, with the exception of what is called the 'rub in a wet sheet.' This consists in having a sheet, dripping wet, thrown round one, and in being vehemently rubbed by the bath-man, the patient assisting. The effect is very bracing and exhilarating on a sultry summer day; and this treatment has the recommendation that it is applied and done with in the course of a few minutes; nor does it need any preliminary process. It is just the thing to get the bath-man to administer to a friend who has come down to visit one, as a slight taste of the quality of the Water Cure.

One pleasing result of the treatment is, that the skin is made beautifully soft and white. Another less pleasing circumstance is, that when there is any impurity lurking in the constitution, a fortnight's treatment brings on what is called a *crisis*, in which the evil is driven off in the form of an eruption all over the body. This result never follows unless where the patient has been in a most unhealthy state. People who merely need a little bracing up need not have the least fear of it. Our own two months of water never produced the faintest appearance of such a thing.

Let us sum up the characteristics of the entire system in the words of Sir E. B. Lytton: —

The first point which impressed me was the extreme and utter *inno-*

cence of the water-cure in skilful hands—in any hands, indeed, not thoroughly new to the system.

The next thing that struck me was the extraordinary ease with which, under this system, good habits are acquired and bad habits are relinquished.

That which, thirdly, impressed me, was no less contrary to all my preconceived opinions. I had fancied that, whether good or bad, the system must be one of great hardship, extremely repugnant and disagreeable. I wondered at myself to find how soon it became so associated with pleasurable and grateful feelings as to dwell upon the mind as one of the happiest passages of existence.

We have left ourselves no space to say anything of the effect of the Water Cure in acute disease. It is said to work wonders in the case of gout, and all rheumatic complaints: the severe suffering occasioned by the former vexatious malady is immediately subdued, and the necessity of colchicum and other deleterious drugs is obviated. Fever and inflammation, too, are drawn off by constant packing, without being allowed to run their usual course. Our readers may find remarkable cures of heart and other diseases recorded at pages 24, 72, 114, and 172, of the *Month at Malvern*. We quote the account of one case:—

I was introduced to a lady, that I might receive her own report of her cure. She had been *for nine years paralysed, from the waist downwards*; pale and emaciated; and coming to Malvern, she had no idea of recovering the use of her limbs, but merely bodily health. In five months she became ruddy, and then her perseverance in being packed twice every day was rewarded. The returning muscular power was *advanced to perfect recovery of the free use of her limbs*. She grew stout and strong, and now *walks ten miles daily*.

We confess we should like to have this story confirmed by some competent authority. It appears to verge on the impossible: unless, indeed, the fact was that the lady was some nervous, fanciful person, who took up a hypochondriac idea that she was paralysed,

and got rid of the notion by having her constitution braced up.

We have already said a good deal of the enjoyable nature of the water system; we make a final quotation from our military friend: —

I have given some account of my daily baths, and on reading over what I have written, I feel quite ashamed of the coldness of the recital of all my delight, the recollection of which makes my mouth water. The reader will observe that I am a Scotchman (proverbially a matter of-fact race), an old fellow, my enemy would say a slow coach. I might enlarge on my ecstatic delight in my baths, my healthy glow, my light-heartedness, my feelings of elasticity, which made me fancy I could trip along the sward like a patent Vestris. I might go much farther, I might indulge in poetic rapture — most unbecoming my mature age — and after all, fall far short of the reality. The reader will do well to allow a large percentage of omitted ecstatic delineation in consequence of want of ardour on the part of the writer. This is in fact due to justice.

See how old patients describe the Water Cure! This is, at all events, a different strain from that of people who have been victimized by ordinary quacks and quack medicines, and who bestow their imprecations on the credulity which has at once ruined their constitutions and emptied their pockets.

We trust we have succeeded in persuading those who have glanced over these pages, that the Water Cure is by no means the violent thing which they have in all probability been accustomed to consider it. There is no need for being nervous about going to it. There is nothing about it that is half such a shock to the system as are blue pill and mercury, purgatives and drastics, leeches and the lancet. Almost every appliance within its range is a source of positive enjoyment; the time spent under it is a cheerful holiday to body and mind. We take it to be quackery and absurdity to maintain that all

possible diseases can be cured by the cold water system ; but, from our own experience, we believe that the system *and its concomitants* do tend powerfully to brace and re-invigorate, when mental exertion has told upon the system, and even threatened to break it down. But really it is no new discovery that fresh air and water, simple food and abundant exercise, change of scene and intermission of toil and excitement, tend to brace the nerves and give fresh vigour to the limbs. In the only respect in which we have any confidence in the Water Cure, it is truly no new system at all. We did not need Priessnitz to tell us that the fair element which, in a hundred forms, makes so great a part of Creation's beauty — trembling, crystal-clear, upon the rosebud ; gleaming in the sunset river ; spreading, as we see it to-day, in the bright blue summer sea ; fleecy-white in the silent clouds, and gay in the evening rainbow, — is the true elixir of health and life, the most exhilarating draught, the most soothing anodyne ; the secret of physical enjoyment, and mental buoyancy and vigour.



CHAPTER XI

CONCERNING FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.*

THERE is a peculiar pleasure in paying a visit to a friend whom you never saw in his own house before. Let it not be believed that in this world there is much difficulty in finding a new sensation. The genial, unaffected, hard-wrought man, who does not think it fine to appear to care nothing for anything, will find a new sensation in many quiet places, and in many simple ways. There is something fresh and pleasant in arriving at an entirely new railway station, in getting out upon a platform on which you never before stood; in finding your friend standing there looking quite at home in a place quite strange to you; in taking in at a glance the expression of the porter who takes your luggage and the clerk who receives your ticket, and reading there something of their character and their life; in going outside, and seeing for the first time your friend's carriage, whether the stately drag or the humbler dog-cart, and beholding horses you never saw before, caparisoned in harness heretofore unseen; in taking your seat upon cushions

* *Friends in Council*: a Series of Readings and Discourse thereon. A New Series. Two Volumes. London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand, 1859.

hitherto unpressed by you, in seeing your friend take the reins, and then in rolling away over a new road, under new trees, over new bridges, beside new hedges, looking upon new landscapes stretching far away, and breaking in upon that latent idea common to all people who have seen very little, that they have seen almost all the world. Then there is something fresh and pleasant in driving for the first time up the avenue, in catching the first view of the dwelling which is to your friend the centre of all the world, in walking up for the first time to your chamber (you ought always to arrive at a country house for a visit about three quarters of an hour before dinner), and then in coming down and finding yourself in the heart of his belongings; seeing his wife and children, never seen before; finding out his favourite books, and coming to know something of his friends, horses, dogs, pigs, and general way of life; and then after ten days, in going away, feeling that you have occupied a new place and seen a new phase of life, henceforward to be a possession for ever.

But it is pleasanter by a great deal to go and pay a visit to a friend visited several times (not too frequently) before: to arrive at the old railway station, quiet and country-like, with trees growing out of the very platform on which you step; to see your friend's old face not seen for two years; to go out and discern the old drag standing just where you remember it, and to smooth down the horses' noses as an old acquaintance; to discover a look of recognition on the man-servant's impassive face, which at your greeting expands into a pleased smile; to drive away along the old road, recognizing cottages and trees; to come in sight of the house again, your friend's conversation and the entire aspect of things

bringing up many little remembrances of the past ; to look out of your chamber window before dinner and to recognize a large beech or oak which you had often remembered when you were far away, and the field beyond, and the hills in the distance, and to know again even the pattern of the carpet and the bed curtains ; to go down to dinner, and meet the old greeting ; to recognize the taste of the claret ; to find the children a little bigger, a little shy at first, but gradually acknowledging an old acquaintance ; and then, when your friend and you are left by yourselves, to draw round the fire (such visits are generally in September), and enjoy the warm, hearty look of the crimson curtains hanging in the self-same folds as twenty-four months since, and talk over many old things.

We feel, in opening the new volumes of *Friends in Council*, as we should in going to pay a visit to an old friend living in the same pleasant home, and at the same pleasant autumnal season in which we visited him before. We know what to expect. We know that there may be little variations from what we have already found, little changes wrought by time ; but, barring great accident or disappointment, we know what kind of thing the visit will be. And we believe that to many who have read with delight the previous volumes of this work, there can hardly be any pleasanter anticipation than that of more of the same wise, kindly, interesting material which they remember. A good many years have passed since the first volume of *Friends in Council* was published ; a good many years even since the second : for, the essays and discourses now given to the public form the third published portion of the work. Continuations of successful works have proverbially proved failures ; the

author was his own too successful rival; and intelligent readers, trained to expect much, have generally declared that the new production was, if not inferior to its predecessor, at all events inferior to what its predecessor had taught them to look for. But there is no falling off here. The writing of essays and conversations, set in a framework of scenery and incident, and delineating character admirably though only incidentally, is the field of literature in which the author stands without a rival. No one in modern days can discuss a grave subject in a style so attractive; no one can convey so much wisdom with so much playfulness and kindliness; no one can evince so much earnestness unalloyed by the least tinge of exaggeration. The order of thought which is contained in *Friends in Council*, is quarried from its author's best vein. Here, he has come upon what gold-diggers call a *pocket*: and he appears to work it with little effort. However difficult it might be for others to write an essay and discourse on it in the fashion of this book, we should judge that its author does so quite easily. It is no task for suns to shine. And it will bring back many pleasant remembrances to the minds of many readers, to open these new volumes, and find themselves at once in the same kindly atmosphere as ever; to find that the old spring is flowing yet. The new series of *Friends in Council* is precisely what the intelligent reader must have expected. A thoroughly good writer can never surprise us. A writer whom we have studied, mused over, sympathized with, can surprise us only by doing something eccentric, affected, unworthy of himself. The more thoroughly we have sympathized with him; the more closely we have marked not only the strong characteristics which are already present in what he writes,

but those little matters which may be the germs of possible new characteristics; the less likely is it that we shall be surprised by anything he does or says. It is so with the author of *Friends in Council*. We know precisely what to expect from him. We should feel aggrieved if he gave us anything else. Of course there will be much wisdom and depth of insight; much strong practical sense: there will be playfulness, pensiveness, pathos; great fairness and justice; much kindness of heart; something of the romantic element; and as for style, there will be language always free from the least trace of affectation; always clear and comprehensible; never slovenly; sometimes remarkable for a certain simple felicity; sometimes rising into force and eloquence of a very high order: a style, in short, not to be parodied, not to be caricatured, not to be imitated except by writing as well. The author cannot sink below our expectations; cannot rise above them. He has already written so much, and so many thoughtful readers have so carefully studied what he has written, that we know the exact length of his tether, and he can say nothing for which we are not prepared. You know exactly what to expect in this new work. You could not, indeed, produce it; you could not describe it, you could not say beforehand what it will be; but when you come upon it, you will feel that it is just what you were sure it would be. You were sure, as you are sure what will be the flavour of the fruit on your pet apple-tree, which you have tasted a hundred times. The tree is quite certain to produce that fruit which you remember and like so well; it is its nature to do so. And the analogy holds further. For, as little variations in weather or in the treatment of the tree—a dry season, or some special

application to the roots — may somewhat alter the fruit, though all within narrow limits ; so may change of circumstances a little affect an author's writings, but only within a certain range. The apple-tree may produce a somewhat different apple ; but it will never produce an orange, neither will it yield a crab.

So here we are again among our old friends. We should have good reason to complain had Dunsford, Ellesmere, or Milverton been absent ; and here they are again just as before. Possibly they are even less changed than they should have been after thirteen or fourteen years, considering what their age was at our first introduction to them. Dunsford, the elderly country parson, once fellow and tutor of his college, still reports the conversations of the friends ; Milverton and Ellesmere are, in their own way, as fond of one another as ever ; Dunsford is still judicious, kind, good, somewhat slow, as country parsons not unnaturally become ; Ellesmere is still sarcastic, keen, clever, with much real worldly wisdom and much affected cynicism overlying a kind and honest heart. As for Milverton, we should judge that in him the author of the work has unconsciously shown us himself ; for assuredly the great characteristics of the author of *Friends in Council* must be that he is laborious, thoughtful, generous, well-read, much in earnest, eager for the welfare of his fellow-men, deeply interested in politics and in history, impatient of puritanical restraints, convinced of the substantial importance of amusement. Milverton, we gather, still lives at his country-seat in Hampshire, and takes some interest in rustic concerns. Ellesmere continues to rise at the bar ; since we last met him has been Solicitor-General, and is now *Sir John*, a member of the House of Commons,

and in the fair way to a Chief Justiceship. The clergyman's quiet life is going on as before. But in addition to our three old friends we find an elderly man, one Mr. Midhurst, whose days have been spent in diplomacy, who is of a melancholy disposition, and takes gloomy views of life, but who is much skilled in cookery, very fat, and very fond of a good dinner. Also Mildred and Blanche, Milverton's cousins, two sisters, have grown up into young women of very different character: and they take some share in the conversations. and, as we shall hereafter see, a still more important part in the action of the story. We feel that we are in the midst of a real group of actual human beings: — just what third-rate historians fail to make us feel when telling us of men and women who have actually lived. The time and place are very varied; but through the greater portion of the book the party are travelling over the Continent. A further variation from the plan of the former volumes, besides the introduction of new characters, is, that while all the essays in the preceding series were written by Milverton, we have now one by Ellesmere, one by Dunsford, and one by Mr. Midhurst, each being in theme and manner very characteristic of its author. But, as heretofore, the writer of the book holds to his principle of the impolicy of 'jading anything too far,' and thinks with Bacon that 'it is good, in discourse and speech of conversation, to vary and intermingle speech of the present occasion with arguments, tales with reasons, asking of questions with telling of opinions, and jest with earnest.' The writer likewise holds by that system which his own practice has done so much to recommend — of giving locality and time to all abstract thought, and thus securing in the case of the majority of readers an interest and a reality in no other way to be

attained. Admirable as are the essays contained in the work, but for their setting in something of a story, and their vivification by being ascribed to various characters, and described as read and discussed in various scenes, they would interest a very much smaller class of readers than now they do. No doubt much of the skill of the dramatist is needed to secure this source of interest. It can be secured only where we feel that the characters are living men and women, and the attempt to secure it has often proved a miserable failure. But it is here that the author of *Friends in Council* succeeds so well. Not only do we know precisely what Dunsford, Milverton, and Ellesmere are like; we know exactly what they ought and what they ought not to say. The author ran a risk in reproducing those old friends. We had a right to expect in each of them a certain idiosyncrasy; and it is not easy to maintain an individuality which does not dwell in mere caricature and exaggeration, but in the truthful traits of actual life. We feel we have a vested interest in the characters of the three friends: not even their author has the right essentially to alter them; we should feel it an injury if he did. But he has done what he intended. Here we have the selfsame men. Not a word is said by one of them that ought to have been said by another. And here it may be remarked, that any one who is well read in the author's writings, will not fail here and there to come upon what will appear familiar to him. Various thoughts, views, and even expressions, occur which the author has borrowed from himself. It is easy to be seen that in all this there is no conscious repetition, but that veins of thought and feeling long entertained have cropped out to the surface again.

We do not know whether or not the readers of *Friends*

in Council will be startled at finding that these volumes show us the grave Milverton and the sarcastic Ellesmere in the capacity of lovers, and leave them in the near prospect of being married — Ellesmere to the bold and dashing Mildred; Milverton to the quiet Blanche. The gradual tending of things to this conclusion forms the main action of the book. The incidents are of the simplest character: there is a plan but no plot, except as regards these marriages. Wearied and jaded with work at home, the three friends of the former volumes resolve on going abroad for awhile. Midhurst and the girls accompany them: and the story is simply that at various places to which they came, one friend read an essay or uttered a discourse (for sometimes the essays are supposed to have been given *extempore*), and the others talked about it. But the gradual progress of matters towards the weddings (it may be supposed that the happy couples are this September on their wedding tours) is traced with much skill and much knowledge of the fashion in which such things go: and it supplies a peculiar interest to the work, which will probably tide many young ladies over essays on such grave subjects as *Government* and *Despotism*. Still, we confess that we had hardly regarded Ellesmere and Milverton as marrying men. We had set them down as too old, grave, and wise, for at least the preliminary stages. We have not forgotten that Dunsford told us * that in the summer of 1847 he supposed no one but himself would speak of Milverton and Ellesmere as young men; and now of course they are twelve years older, and yet about to be married to girls whom we should judge to be about two or three and twenty. And although it is not an unnatural thing that Ellesmere should have got over

* *Friends in Council*, Introduction to Book II.

his affection for the German Gretchen, whose story is so exquisitely told in the *Companions of my Solitude*, we find it harder to reconcile Milverton's marriage with our previous impression of him. Yet perhaps all this is truthful to life. It is not an unnatural thing that a man who for years has settled down into the belief that he has faded, and that for him the romantic interest has gone from life, should upon some fresh stimulus gather himself up from that idea, and think that life is not so far gone after all. Who has not on a beautiful September day sometimes chidden himself for having given in to the impression that the season was so far advanced, and clung to the belief that it is almost summer still?

In a preliminary *Address to the Reader*, the author explains that the essay on *War*, which occupies a considerable portion of the first volume, was written some time ago, and intends no allusion to recent events in Europe. The *Address* contains an earnest protest against the maintenance of large standing armies; it is eloquent and forcible, and it affords additional proof how much the author has thought upon the subject of war, and how deeply he feels upon it. Then comes the *Introduction* proper, written, of course, by Dunsford. It sets out with the praise of conversation, and then it sums up what the 'Friends' have learned in their longer experience of life:—

We 'Friends in Council' are of course somewhat older men than when we first began to meet in friendly conclave; and I have observed as men go on in life they are less and less inclined to be didactic. They have found out that nothing is, didactically speaking, true. They long for exceptions, modifications, allowances. A boy is clear, sharp, decisive in his talk. He would have this. He would do that. He hates this; he loves that: and his loves or his hatreds admit of no exception. He is sure that the one thing is quite right, and the other quite wrong. He is not troubled with doubts. He knows.

I see now why, as men go on in life, they delight in anecdotes. These tell so much, and argue, or pronounce directly, so little.

The three friends were sauntering one day in Milverton's garden, all feeling much overwrought and very stupid. Ellesmere proposed that for a little recreation they should go abroad. Milverton pleads his old horror of picture-galleries, and declares himself content with the unpainted pictures he has in his mind : —

It is curious, but I have been painting two companion pictures ever since we have been walking about in the garden. One consists of some dilapidated garden architecture, with overgrown foliage of all kinds, not forest foliage, but that of rare trees such as the Sumach and Japan-cedar, which should have been neglected for thirty years. Here and there, instead of the exquisite parterre, there should be some miserable patches of potatoes and beans, and some squalid clothes hung out to dry. Two ill-dressed children, but of delicate features, should be playing about an ugly neglected pool that had once been the basin to the fountain. But the foliage should be the chief thing, gaunt, grotesque, rare, beautiful, like an unkempt, uncared-for, lovely mountain girl Underneath this picture: — 'Property in the country, in chancery.'

The companion picture, of course, should be: — 'Property in town, in chancery.' It should consist of two or three hideous, sordid, window-broken, rat-deserted, paintless, blackened houses, that should look as if they had once been too good company for the neighbourhood, and had met with a fall in life, not deplored by any one. At the opposite corner should be a flaunting new gin-palace. I do not know whether I should have the heart to bring any children there, but I would if I could.

The reader will discern that the author of *Friends in Council* has lost nothing of his power of picturesque description, and nothing of his horror of the abuses and cruelties of the law. And the passage may serve to remind of the touching, graphic account of the country residence of a reduced family in the *Companions of my Solitude*.* Ellesmere assures Milverton that he shall not be asked to see a single picture ; and that if Milver-

* Chap. iv.

ton will bring Blanche and Mildred with him, he will himself go and see seven of the chief sewers in seven of the chief towns. The appeal to the sanitarian's feelings is successful; the bargain is struck; and we next find the entire party sauntering, after an early German dinner, on the terrace of some small town on the Rhine, — Dunsford forgets which. Milverton, Ellesmere, and Mr. Midhurst are smoking, and we commend their conversation on the soothing power of tobacco to the attention of the Dean of Carlisle. Dean Close, by a bold figure, calls tobacco a 'gorging fiend.' Milverton holds that smoking is perhaps the greatest blessing that we owe to the discovery of America. He regards its value as abiding in its power to soothe under the vexations and troubles of life. While smoking, you cease to live almost wholly in the future, which miserable men for the most part do. The question arises, whether the sorrows of the old or the young are the most acute? It is admitted that the sorrows of children are very overwhelming for the time, but they are not of that varied, perplexed, and bewildering nature which derives much consolation from smoke. Ellesmere suggests, very truthfully, that the feeling of shame for having done anything wrong, or even ridiculous, causes most acute misery to the young. And, indeed, who does not know, from personal experience, that the sufferings of children of even four or five years old are often quite as dreadful as those which come as the sad heritage of after years? We look back on them now, and smile at them as we think how small were their causes. Well, they were great to us. We were little creatures then, and little things were relatively very great. 'The sports of childhood satisfy the child:' the sorrows of childhood overwhelm the poor little thing. We think a sympathetic

reader would hardly read without a tear as well as a smile, an incident in the early life of Patriek Fraser Tytler, recorded in his recently published biography. When five years old he got hold of the gun of an elder brother, and broke the spring of its lock. What anguish the little boy must have endured, what a crushing sense of having caused an irremediable evil, before he sat down and printed in great letters the following epistle to his brother, the owner of the gun — ‘ Oh, Jamie, think no more of guns, for the main-spring of that is broken, and *my heart is broken!* ’ Doubtless the poor little fellow fancied that for all the remainder of his life he would never feel as he had felt before he touched the unlucky weapon. Doubtless the little heart was just as full of anguish as it could hold. Looking back over many years, most of us can remember a child crushed and overwhelmed by some sorrow which it thought could never be got over, and can feel for our early self as though sympathizing with another personality.

The upshot of the talk which began with tobacco was, that Milverton was prevailed upon to write an essay on a subject of universal interest to all civilized beings, an essay on *Worry*. He felt, indeed, that he should be writing it at a disadvantage; for an essay on worry can be written with full effect only by a thoroughly worried man. There was no worry at all in that quiet little town on the Rhine; they had come there to rest, and there was no intruding duty that demanded that it should be attended to. And probably there is no respect in which that great law of the association of ideas, that *like suggests like*, holds more strikingly true than in the power of a present state of mind, or a present state of outward circumstances, to bring up vividly before us all

such states in our past history. We are depressed, we are worried: and when we look back, all our departed days of worry and depression appear to start up and press themselves upon our view to the exclusion of anything else, so that we are ready to think that we have never been otherwise than depressed and worried all our life. But when more cheerful times come, they suggest only such times of cheerfulness, and no effort will bring back the worry vividly as when we felt it. It is not selfishness or heartlessness; it is the result of an inevitable law of mind that people in happy circumstances should resolutely believe that it is a happy world after all; for looking back, and looking around, the mind refuses to take distinct note of anything that is not somewhat akin to its present state. Milverton wrote an excellent essay on Worry on the evening of that day; but he might possibly have written a better one at Worth-Ashton on the evening of a day on which he had discovered that his coachman was stealing the corn provided for the carriage horses, or galloping these animals about the country at the dead of night to see his friends. We must have a score of little annoyances stinging us at once to have the undiluted sense of being worried. And probably a not wealthy man, residing in the country, and farming a few acres of ground by means of somewhat unfaithful and neglectful servants, may occasionally find so many things going wrong at once, and so many little things demanding to be attended to at once, that he shall experience worry in as high a degree as it can be felt by mortal. Thus truthfully does Milverton's essay begin:—

The great characteristic of modern life is Worry.

If the Pagan religion still prevailed, the new goddess, in whose honour temples would be raised and to whom statues would be erected

in all the capitals of the world, would be the goddess Worry. London would be the chief seat and centre of her sway. A gorgeous statue, painted and enriched after the manner of the ancients (for there is no doubt that they adopted this practice, however barbarous it may seem to us), would be set up to the goddess in the West-end of the town: another at Temple Bar, of less ample dimensions and less elaborate decoration, would receive the devout homage of worshippers who came to attend their lawyers in that quarter of the town: while a statue, on which the cunning sculptor should have impressed the marks of haste, anxiety, and agitation, would be sharply glanced up at, with as much veneration as they could afford to give to it, by the eager men of business in the City.

The goddess Worry, however, would be no local deity, worshipped merely in some great town, like Diana of the Ephesians; but, in the market-places of small rural communities, her statue, made somewhat like a vane, and shifting with every turn of the wind, would be regarded with stolid awe by anxious votaries belonging to what is called the farming interest. Familiar too and household would be her worship; and in many a snug home, where she might be imagined to have little potency, small and ugly images of her would be found as household gods—the Lares and Penates—near to the threshold, and cusconced above the glowing hearth.

The poet, always somewhat inclined to fable, speaks of Love as ruling

The court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and heaven above;

but the dominion of Love, as compared with that of Worry, would be found, in the number of subjects, as the Macedonian to the Persian—in extent of territory, as the county of Rutland to the empire of Russia.

Not verbally accurate is the quotation from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, we may remark; but we may take it for granted that no reader who has exceeded the age of twenty-five will fail to recognize in this half-playful and half-earnest passage the statement of a sorrowful fact. And the essay goes on to set forth many of the causes of modern worry with all the knowledge and earnestness of a man who has seen much of life, and thought much upon what he has seen. The author's

sympathies are not so much with the grand trials of historical personages, such as Charles V., Columbus, and Napoleon, as with the lesser trials and cares of ordinary men; and in the following paragraph we discern at once the conviction of a clear head and the feeling of a kind heart:—

And the ordinary citizen, even of a well-settled state, who, with narrow means, increasing taxation, approaching age, failing health, and augmenting cares, goes plodding about his daily work thickly bestrewed with trouble and worry (all the while, perhaps, the thought of a sick child at home being in the background of his mind), may also, like any hero of renown in the midst of his world-wide and world-attracting fortune, be a beautiful object for our sympathy.

There is indeed no more common error, than to estimate the extent of suffering by the greatness of the cause which have produced it; we mean their greatness as regards the amount of notice which they attract. The anguish of an emperor who has lost his empire, is probably not one whit greater than that of a poor lady who loses her little means in a swindling Bank, and is obliged to take away her daughter from school and to move into an inferior dwelling. Nor is it unworthy of remark, in thinking of sympathy with human beings in suffering, that scrubby-looking little men, with weak hair and awkward demeanour, and not in the least degree gentleman-like, may through domestic worry and bereavement undergo distress quite as great as heroic individuals six feet four inches in height, with a large quantity of raven hair, and with eyes of remarkable depth of expression. It is probable, too, that in the lot of ordinary men a ceaseless and countless succession of little worries does a great deal more to fret away the happiness of life than is done by the few great and overwhelming misfortunes which happen at long intervals. You lose your child,

and your sorrow is overwhelming ; but it is a sorrow on which before many months you look back with a sad yet pleasing interest, and it is a sorrow which you know you are the better for having felt. But petty unfaithfulness, carelessness, and stupidity on the part of your servants ; little vexations and cross-accidents in your daily life ; the ceaseless cares of managing a household and family, and possibly of making an effort to maintain appearances with very inadequate means ; — all those little annoying things which are not misfortune but worry, effectually blister away the enjoyment of life while they last, and serve no good end in respect to mental and moral discipline. ‘Much tribulation,’ deep and dignified sorrow, may prepare men for ‘the kingdom of God ;’ but ceaseless worry, for the most part, does but sour the temper, jaundice the views, and embitter and harden the heart.

‘The grand source of worry,’ says our author, ‘compared with which perhaps all others are trivial, lies in the complexity of human affairs, especially in such an era of civilization as our own.’ There can be no doubt of it. In these modern days, we are encumbered and weighed down with the appliances, physical and moral, which have come to be regarded as essential to the carrying forward of our life. We forget how many thousands of separate items and articles were counted up, as having been used, some time within the last few years, by a dinner-party of eighteen persons, at a single entertainment. What incalculable worry in the procuring, the keeping in order, the using, the damage, the storing up, of that enormous complication of china, glass, silver, and steel ! We can well imagine how a man of simple tastes and quiet disposition, worried even to death by his large

house, his numerous servants and horses, his quantities of furniture and domestic appliances, all of a perishable nature, and all constantly wearing out and going wrong in various degrees, might sigh a wearied sigh for the simplicity of a hermit's cave and a hermit's fare, and for one perennial suit of leather.' Such a man as the Duke of Buccleuch, possessing enormous estates, oppressed by a deep feeling of responsibility, and struggling to maintain a personal supervision of all his intricate and multitudinous belongings, must day by day undergo an amount of worry which the philosopher would probably regard as poorly compensated by a dukedom and three hundred thousand a year. He would be a noble benefactor of the human race who should teach men how to combine the simplicity of the savage life with the refinement and the cleanliness of the civilized. We fear it must be accepted as an unquestionable fact, that the many advantages of civilization are to be obtained only at the price of countless and ceaseless worry. Of course, we must all sometimes sigh for the woods and the wigwam; but the feeling is as vain as that of the psalmist's wearied aspiration, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove: then would I flee away and be at rest!' Our author says,

The great Von Humboldt went into the cottages of South American Indians, and, amongst an unwrinkled people, could with difficulty discern who was the father and who was the son, when he saw the family assembled together.

And how plainly the smooth, cheerful face of the savage testified to the healthfulness, in a physical sense, of a life devoid of worry! If you would see the reverse of the medal, look at the anxious faces, the knit brows, and the bald heads, of the twenty or thirty greatest mer-

chants whom you will see on the Exchange of Glasgow or of Manchester. Or you may find more touching proof of the ageing effect of worry, in the careworn face of the man of thirty with a growing family and an uncertain income; or the thin figure and bloodless cheek which testify to the dull weight ever resting on the heart of the poor widow who goes out washing, and leaves her little children in her poor garret under the care of one of eight years old. But still, the cottages of Humboldt's 'unwrinkled people' were, we have little doubt, much infested with vermin, and possessed a pestilential atmosphere; and the people's freedom from care did but testify to their ignorance, and to their lack of moral sensibility. We must take worry, it is to be feared, along with civilization. As you go down in the scale of civilization, you throw off worry by throwing off the things to which it can adhere. And in these days, in which no man would seriously think of preferring the savage life, with its dirt, its stupidity, its listlessness, its cruelty, the good we may derive from that life, or any life approximating to it, is mainly that of a sort of moral alterative and tonic. The thing itself would not suit us, and would do us no good; but we may be the better for musing upon it. It is like a refreshing shower-bath, it is like breathing a cool breeze after the atmosphere of a hot-house, to dwell for a little, with half-closed eyes, upon pictures which show us all the good of the unworried life, and which say nothing of all the evil. We know the thing is vain: we know it is but an idle fancy; but still it is pleasant and refreshful to think of such a life as Byron has sketched as the life of Daniel Boone. Not in misanthropy, but from the strong preference of a forest life, did the Kentucky backwoodsman keep many

scores of miles ahead of the current of European population setting onwards to the West. We shall feel much indebted to any reader who will tell us where to find anything more delightful than the following stanzas, to read after an essay on modern worry:—

He was not all alone: around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase;
Whose young, unawakened world was ever new,
Nor sin, nor sorrow, yet had left a trace
On her unwrinkled brow; nor could you view
A frown on Nature's or on human face:
The free-born forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions:
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain: the green woods were their portions.
No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions;
Simple they were, not savage, and their rifles,
Though very true, were yet not used for trifles.

Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil:
Nor yet too many, nor too few their numbers,
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil:
The lust which stings, the splendour which ennumbers,
With the free foresters divide no spoil:
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes,
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

The essay on Worry is followed by an interesting conversation on the same subject, at the close of which we are heartily obliged to Blanche for suggesting one pleasant thought; to wit, that children for the most part escape that sad affliction; it is the special heritage of comparatively mature years. And Milverton replies:—

Yes; I have never been more struck with that than when observing a family in the middle class of life going to the sea-side. There is the anxious mother wondering how they shall manage to stow away all the children when they get down. Visions of damp sheets oppress her. The cares of packing sit upon her soul. Doubts of what will become of the house when it is left, are a constant drawback from her thoughts of enjoyment; and she confides to the partner of her cares how willingly, if it were not for the dear children, she would stay at home. He, poor man, has not an easy time of it. He is meditating over the expense, and how it is to be provided for. He knows, if he has any knowledge of the world, that the said expense will somehow or other exceed any estimate he and his wife have made of it. He is studying the route of the journey, and is perplexed by the various modes of going. This one would be less expensive, but would take more time; and then time always turns into expense on a journey. In a word, the old birds are as full of care and trouble as a hen with ducklings; but the young birds! Some of them have never seen the sea before, and visions of unspeakable delight fill their souls — visions that will almost be fulfilled. The journey, and the cramped accommodation, and the packing, and the everything out of place, are matters of pure fun and anticipated joy to them.

We have lingered all this while upon the first chapter of the work: the second contains an essay and conversation on *War*. Of this chapter we shall say no more than that it is earnest and sound in its views, and especially worthy of attentive consideration at the present time. The third chapter is one which will probably be turned to with interest by many readers; it bears the taking title of *A Love Story*. Dunsford, a keen though quiet observer, has discovered that Ellesmere has grown fond of Mildred, though the lawyer was not likely to disclose his love. Dunsford suspects that Mildred's affections are set on Milverton, as he has little doubt those of Blanche are. Both girls are very loving to Dunsford, whom they call their uncle, though he is no relation, and the old clergyman determines to have an explanation with Mildred. He manages to walk alone with her through

the unguarded orchards which lie along the Rhine; and there, somewhat abruptly, he begins to moralize on the grand passion. Mildred remarks what a happy woman she would have been whom Dunsford had loved; when the lucky thought strikes him that he would tell her his own story, never yet told to any one. And then he tells it, very simply and very touchingly. Like most true stories of the kind, it has little incident; but it constituted the romance, not yet outlived, of the old gentleman's existence. He and a certain Alice were brought up together. Like many of the most successful students, Dunsford hated study, and was devoted to music and poetry, to nature and art. But he knew his only chance of winning Alice was to obtain some success in life, and he devoted himself to study. Who does not feel for the old man recalling the past, and, as he remembered those laborious days, saying to the girl by his side, "Always reverence a scholar, my dear; if not for the scholarship, at least for the suffering and the self-denial which have been endured to gain the scholar's proficiency." His only pleasure was in correspondence with Alice. He succeeded at last. He took his degree, being nearly the first man of his year in both of the great subjects of examination; and he might now come home with some hope of having made a beginning of fortune. A gay young fellow, a cousin of Alice, came to spend a few days; and of course this lively, thoughtless youth, without an effort, carried off the prize of all poor Dunsford's toils. You never win the thing on which your heart is set and your life staked; it falls to some one else who cares very little about it. It is poor compensation that you get something you care little for which would have made the happiness of another man. Dunsford discovers one evening, in a walk with Alice, the frustration of all his hopes:—

Alice and I were alone again, and we walked out together in the evening. We spoke of my future hopes and prospects. I remember that I was emboldened to press her arm. She returned the pressure, and for a moment there never was, perhaps, a happier man. Had I known more of love, I should have known that this evident return of affection was anything but a good sign; "and," continued she, in the unconnected manner that you women sometimes speak, "I am so glad that you love dear Henry. Oh, if we could but come and live near you when you get a curacy, how happy we should all be." This short sentence was sufficient. There was no need of more explanation. I knew all that had happened, and felt as if I no longer trod upon the firm earth, for it seemed a quicksand under me.

The agony of that dull evening, the misery of that long night! I have sometimes thought that unsuccessful love is almost too great a burden to be put upon such a poor creature as man. But He knows best; and it must have been intended, for it is so common.

The next day I remember I borrowed Henry's horse, and rode madly about, bounding through woods (I who had long forgotten to ride) and galloping over open downs. If the animal had not been wiser and more sane than I was, we should have been dashed to pieces many times. And so by sheer exhaustion of body I deadened the misery of my mind, and looked upon their happy state with a kind of stupefaction. In a few days I found a pretext for quitting my home, and I never saw your mother again, for it was your mother, Mildred, and you are not like her, but like your father, and still I love you. But the great wound has never been healed. It is a foolish thing, perhaps, that any man should so doat upon a woman, that he should never afterwards care for any other, but so it has been with me; and you cannot wonder that a sort of terror should come over me when I see anybody in love, and when I think that his or her love is not likely to be returned.

Who would have thought that Dunsford, with his gaiters, lying on the grass listening cheerfully to the lively talk of his two friends, or sitting among his bees repeating Virgil to himself, or going about among his parishioners, the ideal of prosaic content and usefulness, had still in him this store of old romance? In asking the question, all we mean is to remark an apparent inconsistency: we have no doubt at all of the philosophic

truth of the representation. Probably it is only in the finer natures that such early fancies linger with appreciable effect. We do not forget the perpetually repeated declarations of Mr. Thackeray; we did not read *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story* for nothing; we remember the very absurd incident which is told of Dr. Chalmers, who in his last years testified his remembrance of an early sweetheart by sticking his card with two wafers behind a wretched little *silhouette* of her. And it is conceivable that the tenderest and most beautiful reminiscences of a love of departed days may linger with a man who has grown grey, fat, and even snuffy. But it is only in the case of remarkably tidy, neat, and clever old gentlemen that such feelings are likely to attract much sympathy from their juniors. Possibly this world has more of such lingering romance than is generally credited. Possibly with all but very stolid and narrow natures, no very strong feeling goes without leaving some trace.

Pain and grief

Are transitory things no less than joy;
And though *they leave us not the men we were*,
Yet they do leave us.

Possibly it is not without some little stir of heart that most thoughtful aged persons can revisit certain spots, or see certain days return. And the affection which would have worn itself down into dull common-place in success, by being disappointed and frustrated, lives on in memory with diminished vividness but with increasing beauty, which the test of actual fact can never make prosaic. Dunsford tells Mildred what was his great inducement to make this continental tour. Not the Rhine; not the es-
says nor the conversations of his friends. At the Palace of the Luxemburg there is a fine picture, called *Les illu-*

sions perdues. It is one of the most affecting pictures Dunsford ever saw. But that is not its peculiar merit. One girl in the picture is the image of what Alice was.

The chief thing I had to look forward to in this journey we are making was, that we might return by way of Paris, and that I might see that picture again. You must contrive that we do return that way. Ellesmere will do anything to please you, and Milverton is always perfectly indifferent as to where he goes, so that he is not asked to see works of art, or to accompany a party of sight-seers to a cathedral. We will go and see this picture together once; and once I must see it alone.

And a very touching sight it would be to one who knew the story, the grey-haired old clergyman looking, for a long while, at that young face. It would be indeed a contrast, the aged man, and the youthful figure in the picture. Dunsford never saw Alice again after his early disappointment: he never saw her as she grew matronly and then old; and so, though now in her grave, she remained in his memory the same young thing forever. The years which had made him grow old, had wrought not the slightest change upon her. And Alice, old and dead, was the same on the canvas still.

Dunsford's purpose in telling his love-story, was to caution Mildred against falling in love with Milverton. She told him there was no danger. Once, she frankly said, she had long struggled with her feelings, not only from natural pride, but for the sake of Blanche, who loved Milverton better and would be less able to control her love. But she had quite got over the struggle; and though now intensely sympathizing with her cousin, she felt she never could resolve to marry him. So the conversation ended satisfactorily; and then a short sentence shows us a scene, beautiful, vivid, and complete:—

We walked home silently amidst the mellow orchards glowing radiantly in the rays of the setting sun.

The next chapter contains an Essay and conversation on *Criticism*: but its commencement shows us Dunsford still employed in the interests of his friends. He tells Milverton that Blanche is growing fond of him. We can hardly give Milverton credit for sincerity or judgment in being "greatly distressed and vexed." For once, he was shamming. All middle-aged men are much flattered and pleased with the admiration of young girls. Milverton declared that the thing must be put a stop to; that "the idea of a young and beautiful girl throwing her affections away upon a faded widower like himself, was absurd." However, as the days went on, Milverton began to be extremely attentive to Blanche; asked her opinion about things quite beyond her comprehension; took long walks with her, and assured Dunsford privately that "Blanche had a great deal more in her than most people supposed, and that she was becoming an excellent companion." Who does not recognize the process by which clever men persuade themselves into the belief that they are doing a judicious thing in marrying stupid women?

The chapter which follows that on *Criticism*, contains a conversation on *Biography*, full of interesting suggestions which our space renders it impossible for us to quote; but we cannot forego the pleasure of extracting the following paragraphs. It is Milverton who speaks:—

During Walter's last holidays, one morning after breakfast he took a walk with me. I saw something was on the boy's mind. At last he suddenly asked me, "Do sons often write the lives of fathers?"—"Often," I replied, "but I do not think they are the best kind of biographers, for you see, Walter, sons cannot well tell the faults and weaknesses of their fathers, and so filial biographies are often rather insipid

performances." — "I don't know about that," he said, "I think I could write yours. I have made it already into chapters." "Now then, my boy," I said, "begin it: let us have the outline at least." Walter then commenced his biography.

"The first chapter," he said, "should be you and I and Henry walking amongst the trees and settling which should be cut down, and which should be transplanted." "A very pretty chapter," I said, "and a great deal might be made of it." "The second chapter," he continued, "should be your going to the farm, and talking to the pigs." "Also a very good chapter, my dear." "The third chapter," he said, after a little thought, "should be your friends. I would describe them all, and what they could do." There, you see, Ellesmere, you would come in largely, especially as to what you could do. "An excellent chapter," I exclaimed, and then of course I broke out into some paternal admonition about the choice of friends, which I know will have no effect whatever, but still one cannot help uttering these paternal admonitions.

"Now then," I said, "for chapter four." Here Walter paused, and looked about him vaguely for a minute or two. At length he seemed to have got hold of the right idea, for he burst out with the words, "My going back to school;" and that, it seemed, was to be the end of the biography.

Now, was there ever so honest a biographer? His going back to school was the "be-all and end-all here" with him, and he resolved it should be the same with his hero, and with everybody concerned in the story.

Then see what a pleasant biographer the boy is! He does not drag his hero down through the vale of life, amidst declining fortune, breaking health, dwindling away of friends, and the usual dreariness of the last few stages. Neither does the biography end with the death of his hero; and by the way, it is not very pleasant to have one's children contemplating one's death, even for the sake of writing one's life; but the biographer brings the adventures of his hero to an end by his own going back to school. How delightful it would be if most biographers planned their works after Walter's fashion: just gave a picture of their hero at his farm, or his business; then at his pleasure, as Walter brought me amongst my trees; then, to show what manner of man he was, gave some description of his friends; and concluded by giving an account of their own going back to school—a conclusion that is greatly to be desired for many of them.

When we begin to copy a passage from this work, we

find it very difficult to stop. But the thoughtful reader will not need to have it pointed out to him how much sound wisdom is conveyed in that playful form. And here is excellent advice as to the fashion in which men may hope to get through great intellectual labour: says Ellesmere, —

I can tell you in a very few words how all work is done. Getting up early, eating vigorously, saying "No" to intruders resolutely, doing one thing at a time, thinking over difficulties at odd times, that is, when stupid people are talking in the House of Commons, or speaking at the Bar, not indulging too much in affections of any kind which waste the time and energies, carefully changing the current of your thoughts before you go to bed, planning the work of the day in the quarter of an hour before you get up, playing with children occasionally, and avoiding fools as much as possible: that is the way to do a great deal of work.

Milverton remarks, with justice, that some practical advices as to the way in which a working man might succeed in avoiding fools were very much to be desired, inasmuch as that brief direction contains the whole art of life; and suggests with equal justice that the taking of a daily bath should be added to Ellesmere's catalogue of appliances which aid in working.

We cannot linger upon the remaining pages which treat of *Biography*, nor upon two interesting chapters concerning *Proverbs*. It may be noticed, however, that Ellesmere insists that the best proverb in the world is the familiar English one, 'Nobody knows where the shoe pinches but the wearer;' while Milverton tells us that the Spanish language is far richer in proverbs than that of any other nation. But we hasten to an essay which will be extremely fresh and interesting to all readers. We have had many essays by Milverton: here is one by Ellesmere. He had announced some time before

his purpose of writing an essay on *The Arts of Self-Advancement*, and Mildred, whom Ellesmere took a pleasure in annoying by making a parade of mean, selfish, and cynical views, discerned at once that in such an essay he would have an opportunity of bringing together a crowd of these, and declared before Ellesmere began to write it that it would be a nauseous essay.' The essay is finished at length. The friends are now at Salzburg; and on a very warm day they assembled in a sequestered spot whence they could see the snowy peaks of the Tyrolese Alps. Ellesmere begins by deprecating criticism of his style, declaring that anything inaccurate or ungrammatical is put in on purpose. Then he begins to read:—

In the first place, it is desirable to be born north of the Tweed (I like to begin at the beginning of things); and if that cannot be managed, you must at least contrive to be born in a moderately-sized town—somewhere. You thus get the advantage of being favoured by a small community without losing any individual force. If I had been born in Affpuddle—Milverton in Tolpuddle—and Dunsford in Tollerporcorum (there are such places, at least I saw them once arranged together in a petition to the House of Commons), the men of Affpuddle, Tolpuddle, and Tollerporcorum would have been proud of us, would have been true to us, and would have helped to push our fortunes. I see, with my mind's eye, a statue of Dunsford raised in Tollerporcorum. You smile, I observe; but it is the smile of ignorance, for let me tell you, it is of the first importance not to be born vaguely, as in London, or in some remote country-house. If you cannot, however, be born properly, contrive at least to be connected with some small sect or community, who may consider your renown as part of their renown, and be always ready to favour and defend you.

After this promising introduction Ellesmere goes on to propound views which in an extraordinary way combine real good sense and sharp worldly wisdom with a parade of all sorts of mean shifts and contemptible tricks where-

by to take advantage of the weakness, folly, and wickedness of human nature. Very characteristically he delights in thinking how he is shocking and disgusting poor Mildred : of course Dunsford and Milverton understand him. And the style is as characteristic as the thought. It is unquestionably Ellesmere to whose essay we are listening ; Milverton could not and would not have produced such a discourse. We remember to have read in a review, published several years since, of the former series of *Friends in Council*, that it was judicious in the author of that work, though introducing several friends as talking together, to represent all the essays as written by one individual ; because, although he could keep up the individuality of the speakers through a conversation, it was doubtful whether he could have succeeded in doing so through essays purporting to be written by each of them. We do not know whether the author ever saw the challenge thus thrown down to him : but it is certain that in the present series he has boldly attempted the thing, and thoroughly succeeded. And it may be remarked that not one of Ellesmere's propositions can be regarded as mere vagaries — every one of them contains truth, though truth put carefully in the most disagreeable and degrading way. Who does not know how great an element of success it is to belong to a sect or class which regard your reputation as identified with their own, and cry you up accordingly ? It is to be admitted that there is the preliminary difficulty of so far overcoming individual envies and jealousies as to get your class to accept you as their representative ; but once *that* end is accomplished the thing is done. As to being born north of the Tweed, a Scotch Lord Chancellor and a Scotch Bishop of London are instructive instances. And however much

Scotchmen may abuse one another at home, it cannot be denied that all Scotchmen feel it a sacred duty to stand up for every Scotchman who has attained to eminence beyond the boundaries of his native land. Scotland, indeed, in the sense in which Ellesmere uses the phrase, is a *small community*; and a community of very energetic, self-denying, laborious, and determined men, with very many feelings in common which they have in common only with their countrymen, and with an invincible tendency in all times of trouble to remember the old cry of *Highlandmen, shoulder to shoulder!* Let the ambitious reader muse on what follows:—

Let your position be commonplace, whatever you are yourself. If you are a genius, and contrive to conceal the fact, you really deserve to get on in the world, and you will do so, if only you keep on the level road. Remember always that the world is a place where second-rate people mostly succeed: not fools, nor first-rate people.

Cynically put, no doubt, but admirably true. A great blockhead will never be made an archbishop; but in ordinary times a great genius stands next to him in the badness of his chance. After all, good sense and sound judgment are the essentially needful things in all but very exceptional situations in life—and for these commend us to the safe, steady-going, commonplace man. It cannot be denied that the great mass of mankind stand in doubt and fear of people who are wonderfully clever. What an amount of stolid, self-complacent, ignorant, stupid, conceited respectability, is wrapped up in the declaration concerning any person, that he is “too clever by half!” How plainly it teaches that the general belief is that too ingenious machinery will break down in practical working, and that most men will do wrong who have the power to do it!

The following propositions are true in very large communities, but they will not hold good in the country or in little towns : —

Remember always that what is real and substantive ultimately *has its way in this world.*

You make good bricks for instance: it is in vain that your enemies prove that you are a heretic in morals, politics, and religion; insinuate that you beat your wife; and dwell loudly on the fact that you failed in making picture-frames. In so far as you are a good brick-maker, you have all the power that depends on good brick-making; and the world will mainly look to your positive qualities as a brick-maker.

After having gone on with a number of maxims of a very base, selfish, and suspicious nature, to the increasing horror of the girls who are listening, Ellesmere passes from the consideration of modes of action to a much more important matter : —

Those who wish for self-advancement should remember, that the art in life is not so much to do a thing well, as to get a thing that has been moderately well done largely talked about. Some foolish people, who should have belonged to another planet, give all their minds to doing their work well. This is an entire mistake. This is a grievous loss of power. Such a method of proceeding may be very well in Jupiter, Mars, or Saturn, but is totally out of place in this puffing, advertising, bill-sticking part of creation. To rush into the battle of life without an abundance of kettle-drums and trumpets is a weak and ill-advised adventure, however well-armed and well-accounted you may be. As I hate vague maxims, I will at once lay down the proportions in which force of any kind should be used in this world. Suppose you have a force which may be represented by the number one hundred: seventy-three parts at least of that force should be given to the trumpet; the remaining twenty-seven parts may not disadvantageously be spent in doing the thing which is to be trumpeted. This is a rule unlike some rules in grammar, which are entangled and controlled by a multitude of vexatious exceptions; but it applies equally to the conduct of all matters upon earth, whether social, moral, artistic, literary, political, or religious.

Ellesmere goes on to sum up the personal qualities needful to success; and having sketched out the charac-

ter of a mean, crafty, sharp, energetic rascal, he concludes by saying that such a one

will not fail to succeed in any department of life — provided always he keeps for the most part to one department, and does not attempt to conquer in many directions at once. I only hope that, having profited by this wisdom of mine, he will give me a share of the spoil.

Thus the essay ends; and then the *discourse thereon* begins —

MILVERTON. Well, of all the intolerable wretches and blackguards —

MR. MIDHURST. A conceited prig, too!

DUNSFORD. A wicked, designing villain!

ELLESMERE. Any more: any more? Pray go on, gentlemen; and have you, ladies, nothing to say against the wise man of the world that I have depicted?

And yet the upshot of the conversation was, that though given in a highly disagreeable and obtrusively base form, there was much truth in what Ellesmere had said. It is to be remembered that he did not pretend to describe a good man, but only a successful one. And it is to be remembered likewise that prudence verges toward baseness; and that the difference between the suggestions of each lies very much in the fashion in which these suggestions are put and enforced. As to the use of the trumpet, how many advertising tailors and pill-makers could testify to the soundness of Ellesmere's principle? And beyond the Atlantic it finds special favor. When Barnum exhibited his mermaid, and stuck up outside his show-room a picture of three beautiful mermaids, of human size, with flowing hair, basking upon a summer sea, while inside the show-room he had the hideous little contorted figure made of a monkey with a fish's tail attached to it, probably the proportion of the trumpet to the thing trumpeted was even greater than

seventy-three to twenty-seven. Dunsford suggests, for the comfort of those who will not stoop to unworthy means for obtaining success, the beautiful saying, that "Heaven is probably a place for those who have failed on earth." And Ellesmere, adhering to his expressed views, declares —

If you had attended to them earlier in life, Dunsford would now be Mr. Dean; Milverton would be the Right Honorable Leonard Milverton, and the leader of a party; Mr. Midhurst would be chief cook to the Emperor Napoleon; the bull-dog would have been promoted to the parlor; I, but no man is wise for himself, should have been Lord Chancellor; Walter would be at the head of his class without having any more knowledge than he has at present; and as for you two girls, one would be a Maid of Honor to the Queen, and the other would have married the richest man in the county.

We have not space to tell how Ellesmere planned to get Mr. Midhurst to write an essay on the *Miseries of Human Life*; nor how at Trèves, upon a lowering day, the party, seated in the ancient amphitheatre, heard it read; nor how fully, eloquently, and not unfairly, the gloomy man, not without a certain solemn enjoyment, summed up his sad catalogue of the ills that flesh is heir to; nor how Milverton agreed in the evening to speak an answer to the essay, and show that life was not so miserable after all; nor how Ellesmere, eager to have it answered effectively, determined that Milverton should have the little accessories in his favor, the red curtains drawn, a blazing wood-fire, and plenty of light; nor how before the answer began, he brought Milverton a glass of wine to cheer him; nor how Milverton endeavored to show that in the present system misery was not quite predominant, and that much good in many ways came out of ill. Then we have some talk about *Pleasantness*; and Dunsford is persuaded to write and read an essay on that

subject, which he read one morning, 'while we were sitting in the balcony of an hotel, in one of the small towns that overlook the Moselle, which was flowing beneath in a reddish turbid stream.' In the conversation which follows Milverton says,

It is a fault certainly to which writers are liable, that of exaggerating the claims of their subject.

And how truly is that said ! Indeed we can quite imagine a very earnest man feeling afraid to think too much and long about any existing evil, for fear it should greatness on his view into a thing so large and pernicious, that he should be constrained to give all his life to the wrestling with that one thing ; and attach to it an importance which would make his neighbors think him a monomaniac. If you think long and deeply upon any subject, it grows in magnitude and weight : if you think of it too long, it may grow big enough to exclude the thought of all things beside. If it be an existing and prevalent evil you are thinking of, you may come to fancy that if that one thing could be done away, it would be well with the human race,—all evil would go with it. We can sympathize deeply with that man who died a short while since, who wrote volume after volume to prove that if men would only leave off stooping, and learn to hold themselves upright, it would be the grandest blessing that ever came to humanity. We can quite conceive the process by which a man might come to think so, without admitting mania as a cause. We confess, for ourselves, that so deeply do we feel the force of the law Milverton mentions, there are certain evils of which we are afraid to think much, for fear we should come to be able to think of nothing else, and of nothing more.

Then a pleasant chapter, entitled *Lovers' Quarrels*, tells

us how matters are progressing with the two pairs. Milverton and Blanche are going on most satisfactorily; but Ellesmere and Mildred are wayward and hard to keep right. Ellesmere sadly disappointed Mildred by the sordid views he advanced in his essay, and kept advancing in his talk; and like a proud and shy man of middle age when in love, he was ever watching for distant slight indications of how his suit might be received, and rendered fractious by the uncertainty of Mildred's conduct and bearing. And probably women have little notion by what slight and hardly thought-of sayings and doings they may have repressed the declaration and the offer which might perhaps have made them happy. Day by day Dunsford was vexed by the growing estrangement between two persons who were really much attached; and this unhappy state of matters might have ended in a final separation but for the happy incident recorded in the chapter called *Rowing down the River Moselle*. The party had rowed down the river, talking as usual of many things:—

It was just at this point of the conversation that we pulled in nearer to the land, as Walter had made signs that he wished now to get into the boat. It was a weedy rushy part of the river that we entered. Fixer saw a rat or some other creature, which he was wild to get at. Ellesmere excited him to do so, and the dog sprang out of the boat. In a minute or two Fixer became entangled in the weeds, and seemed to be in danger of sinking. Ellesmere, without thinking what he was about, made a hasty effort to save the dog, seized hold of him, but lost his own balance and fell out of the boat. In another moment Mildred gave me the end of her shawl to hold, which she had wound round herself, and sprang out too. The sensible diplomatist lost no time in throwing his weighty person to the other side of the boat. The two boatmen did the same. But for this move, the boat would, in all probability, have capsized, and we should all have been lost. Mildred was successful in clutching hold of Ellesmere; and Milverton and I managed to haul them close to the boat and to pull them in. Ellesmere had not relinquished hold of Fixer. All this happened, as such acci-

dents do, in almost less time than it takes to describe them. And now came another dripping creature splashing into the boat; for Master Walter, who can swim like a duck, had plunged in directly he saw the accident, but too late to be of any assistance.

Things are now all right; and Ellesmere next day announces to his friends that Mildred and he are engaged. Two chapters, on *Government* and *Despotism* respectively, give us the last thoughts of the Friends abroad; then we have a pleasant picture of them all in Milverton's farm-yard, under a great sycamore, discoursing cheerfully of country cares. The closing chapter of the book is on *The Need for Tolerance*. It contains a host of thoughts which we should be glad to extract; but we must be content with a wise saying of Milverton's:—

For a man who has been rigidly good to be supremely tolerant, would require an amount of insight which seems to belong only to the greatest genius.

For we hardly sympathize with that which we have not in some measure experienced; and the great thing, after all, which makes us tolerant of the errors of other men, is the feeling that under like circumstances we should have ourselves erred in like manner; or, at all events, the being able to see the error in such a light as to feel that there is that within ourselves which enables us at least to understand how men should in such a way have erred. The sins on which we are most severe are those concerning which our feeling is, that we cannot conceive how any man could possibly have done them. And probably such would be the feeling of a rigidly good man concerning every sin.

So we part, for the present, from our Friends, not without the hope of again meeting them. We have been lie

tening to the conversation of living men ; and, in parting, we feel the regret that we should feel in quitting a kind friend's house after a pleasant visit, not, perhaps, to be renewed for many a day. And this is a changing world. We have been breathing the old atmosphere, and listening to the old voices talking in the old way. We have had new thought and new truth, but presented in the fashion we have known and enjoyed for years. Happily we can repeat our visit as often as we please, without the fear of worrying or wearying ; for we may open the book at will. And we shall hope for new visits likewise. Milverton will be as earnest and more hopeful, Ellesmere will retain all that is good, and that which is provoking will now be softened down. No doubt by this time they are married. Where have they gone ? The continent is unsettled, and they have often already been there. Perhaps they have gone to Scotland ? No doubt they have. And perhaps before the leaves are sere we may find them out among the sea lochs of the beautiful Frith of Clyde, or under the shadow of Ben Nevis.



CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNING THE PULPIT IN SCOTLAND.

NEARLY forty years since, Dr. Chalmers, one of the parish ministers of Glasgow, preached several times in London. He was then in the zenith of his popularity as a pulpit orator. Canning and Wilberforce went together to hear him upon one occasion; and after sitting spell-bound under his eloquence, Canning said to Wilberforce when the sermon was done, 'The tartan beats us; we have no preaching like that in England.'

In October 1855, the Rev. John Caird, incumbent of the parish of Errol, in Perthshire, preached before the Queen and Court at the church of Crathie. Her Majesty was so impressed by the discourse that she commanded its publication; and the Prince Consort, no mean authority, expressed his admiration of the ability of the preacher, saying that 'he had not heard a preacher like him for seven years, and did not expect to enjoy a like pleasure for as long a period to come.' So, at all events, says a paragraph in *The Times* of December 12th, 1855.

It is somewhat startling to find men of cultivated taste, who are familiar with the highest class preaching of the English Church, expressing their sense of the superior

effect of pulpit oratory of a very different kind. No doubt Caird and Chalmers are the best of their class; and the overwhelming effect which they and a few other Scotch preachers have often produced, is in a great degree owing to the individual genius of the men, and not to the school of preaching they belong to. Yet both are representatives of what may be called the Scotch school of preaching: and with all their genius, they never could have carried away their audience as they have done, had they been trammelled by those canons of taste to which English preachers almost invariably conform. Their manner is just the regular Scotch manner, vivified into tenfold effect by their own peculiar genius. Preaching in Scotland is a totally different thing from what it is in England. In the former country it is generally characterized by an amount of excitement in delivery and matter, which in England is only found among the most fanatical Dissenters, and is practically unknown in the pulpits of the national church. No doubt English and Scotch preaching differ in substance to a certain extent. Scotch sermons are generally longer, averaging from forty minutes to an hour in the delivery. There is a more prominent and constant pressing of what is called evangelical doctrine. The treatment of the subject is more formal. There is an introduction; two or three *heads of discourse*, formally announced; and a practical conclusion; and generally the entire Calvinistic system is set forth in every sermon. But the main difference lies in the manner in which the discourses of the two schools are delivered. While English sermons are generally read with quiet dignity, in Scotland they are very commonly repeated from memory, and given with great vehemence and oratorical effect, and abundant gesticulation. Nor is

it to be supposed that when we say the difference is mainly in manner, we think it a small one. There is only one account given by all who have heard the most striking Scotch preachers, as to the proportion which their manner bears in the effect produced. Loekhart, late of *The Quarterly*, says of Chalmers, ‘Never did the world possess any orator whose minutest peculiarities of gesture and voice have more power in increasing the effect of what he says, whose delivery, in other words, is the first, and the second, and the third excellence in his oratory, more truly than is that of Dr. Chalmers.’ The same words might be repeated of Caird, who has succeeded to Chalmers’s fame. A hundred little circumstances of voice and manner — even of appearance and dress — combine to give his oratory its overwhelming power. And where manner is everything, difference in manner is a total difference. Nor does manner affect only the less educated and intelligent class of hearers. It cannot be doubted that the unparalleled impression produced, even on such men as Wilberforce, Canning, Loekhart, Lord Jeffrey, and Prince Albert, was mainly the result of manner. In point of substance and style, many English preachers are quite superior to the best of the Scotch. In these respects, there are no preachers in Scotland who come near the mark of Melvill, Manning, Arnold, or Bishop Wilberforce. Loekhart says of Chalmers,

I have heard many men deliver sermons far better arranged in point of argument; and I have heard very many deliver sermons far more uniform in elegance, both of conception and of style; but most unquestionably, I have never heard, either in England or Scotland, or in any other country, a preacher whose eloquence is capable of producing an effect so strong and irresistible as his.*

* *Peter’s Letters to his Kinsfolk*, vol. iii. p. 267.

The best proof how much Chalmers owed to his manner, is, that in his latter days, when he was no longer able to give them with his wonted animation and feeling, the very same discourses fell quite flat on his congregation.

It is long since Sydney Smith expressed his views as to the chilliness which is the general characteristic of the Anglican pulpit. In the preface to his published sermons, he says :

The English, generally remarkable for doing very good things in a very bad manner, seem to have reserved the maturity and plenitude of their awkwardness for the pulpit. A clergyman clings to his velvet cushion with either hand, keeps his eye rivetted on his book, speaks of the ecstasies of joy and fear with a voice and a face which indicates neither; and pinions his body and soul into the same attitude of limb and thought, for fear of being thought theatrical and affected. The most intrepid veteran of us all dares no more than wipe his face with his cambric sudarium; if by mischance his hand slip from its orthodox gripe of the velvet, he draws it back as from liquid brimstone, and atones for the indecorum by fresh inflexibility and more rigorous sameness. Is it wonder, then, that every semi-delirious sectary who pours forth his animated nonsense with the genuine look and voice of passion, should gesticulate away the congregation of the most profound and learned divine of the established church, and in two Sundays preach him bare to the very sexton? Why are we natural everywhere but in the pulpit? No man expresses warm and animated feelings anywhere else, with his mouth only, but with his whole body; he articulates with every limb, and talks from head to foot with a thousand voices. Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions only? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is sin to be taken from men, as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber? Or from what possible perversion of common sense are we all to look like field preachers in Zembla, holy lumps of ice, numbed into quiescence and stagnation and mumbling?

Now in Scotland, for very many years past, the standard style of preaching has been that which the lively yet gentle satirist wished to see more common in England. Whether successfully or not, Scotch preachers aim at what Sydney Smith regarded as the right way of

preaching — ‘to rouse, to appeal, to inflame, to break through every barrier, up to the very haunts and chambers of the soul.’ Whether this end be a safe one to propose to each one of some hundreds of men of ordinary ability and taste, may be a question. An unsuccessful attempt at it is very likely to land a man in gross offence against common taste and common sense, from which he whose aim is less ambitious is almost certainly safe. The preacher whose purpose is to preach plain sense in such a style and manner as not to offend people of education and refinement, if he fail in doing what he wishes, may indeed be dull, but will not be absurd and offensive. But however this may be, it is curious that this impassioned and highly oratorical school of preaching should be found among a cautious, cool-headed race like the Scotch. The Scotch are proverbial for long heads, and no great capacity of emotion. Sir Walter Scott, in *Rob Roy*, in describing the preacher whom the hero heard in the crypt of Glasgow Cathedral, says that his countrymen are much more accessible to logic than rhetoric; and that this fact determines the character of the preaching which is most acceptable to them. If the case was such in those times, matters are assuredly quite altered now. Logic is indeed not overlooked: but it is brilliancy of illustration, and, above all, great feeling and earnestness, which go down. Mr. Caird, the most popular of modern Scotch preachers, though possessing a very powerful and logical mind, yet owes his popularity with the mass of hearers almost entirely to his tremendous power of feeling and producing emotion. By way of contrast to Sydney Smith’s picture of the English pulpit manner, let us look at one of Chalmers’s great appearances. Look on *that* picture, and then on this:

The Doctor's manner during the whole delivery of that magnificent discourse was strikingly animated: while the enthusiasm and energy he threw into some of his bursts rendered them quite overpowering. One expression which he used, together with his action, his look, and the tones of his voice, made a most vivid and indelible impression on my memory. . . . While uttering these words, which he did with peculiar emphasis, *accompanying them with a flash from his eye and a stamp of his foot, he threw his right arm with clenched fist right across the book-board, and brandished it full in the face of the Town Council, sitting in state before him.* The words seem to startle, like an electric shock, the whole audience.

Very likely they did: but we should regret to see a bishop, or even a dean, have recourse to such means of producing an impression. We shall give one other extract descriptive of Chalmers's manner:

It was a transcendently grand, a glorious burst. The energy of his action corresponded. Intense emotion beamed from his countenance. I cannot describe the appearance of his face better than by saying it was lighted up almost into a glare. The congregation were intensely excited, leaning forward in the pews like a forest bending under the power of the hurricane, — looking steadfastly at the preacher, and listening in breathless wonderment. So soon as it was concluded, there was (as invariably was the case at the close of the Doctor's bursts) a deep sigh, or rather gasp for breath, accompanied by a movement throughout the whole audience.*

There is indeed in the Scotch Church a considerable class of most respectable preachers who read their sermons, and who, both for matter and manner, might be transplanted without remark into the pulpit of any cathedral in England. There is a school, also, of high standing and no small popularity, whose manner and style are calm and beautiful; but who, through deficiency of that vehemence which is at such a premium in Scotland at present, will never draw crowds such as hang

* *Life of Chalmers*, vol. i. pp. 462, 3, and 467, 8. It should be mentioned that Chalmers, notwithstanding this tremendous vehemence, always read his sermons.

upon the lips of more excited orators. Foremost among such stands Mr. Robertson, minister of Strathmartin, in Forfarshire. Dr. McCulloch, of Greenock, and Dr. Veitch, of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, are among the best specimens of the class. But that preaching which interests, leads onward, and instructs, has few admirers compared with that which thrills, overwhelms, and sweeps away. And from the impression made on individuals so competent to judge as those already mentioned, it would certainly seem that, whether suited to the dignity of the pulpit or not, the deepest oratorical effect is made by the latter, even on cultivated minds. Some of the most popular preachers in England have formed themselves on the Scotch model. Melvill and M'Neile are examples: so, in a different walk, is Ryle, so well known by his tracts. We believe that Melvill in his early days delivered his sermons from memory, and of late years only has taken to reading, to the considerable diminution of the effect he produces. We may here remark, that in some country districts the prejudice of the people against clergymen reading their sermons is excessive. It is indeed to be admitted that it is a more natural thing that a speaker should look at the audience he is addressing, and appear to speak from the feeling of the moment, than that he should read to them what he has to say; but it is hard to impose upon a parish minister, burdened with pastoral duty, the irksome school-boy task of committing to memory a long sermon, and perhaps two, every week. The system of reading is spreading rapidly in the Scotch Church, and seems likely in a few years to become all but universal. Caird reads his sermons closely on ordinary Sundays, but delivers entirely from memory in preaching on any particular occasion.

It may easily be imagined that when every one of fourteen or fifteen hundred preachers understands on entering the church that his manner *must* be animated if he looks for preferment, very many will have a very bad manner. It is wonderful, indeed, when we look to the average run of respectable Scotch preachers, to find how many take kindly to the emotional style. Often, of course, such a style is thoroughly contrary to the man's idiosyncrasy. Still, he must *seem* warm and animated; and the consequence is frequently loud speaking without a vestige of feeling, and much roaring when there is nothing whatever in what is said to demand it. Noise is mistaken for animation. We have been startled on going into a little country kirk, in which any speaking above a whisper would have been audible, to find the minister from the very beginning of the service, roaring as if speaking to people a quarter of a mile off. Yet the rustics were still, and appeared attentive. They regarded their clergyman as 'a powerfu' preacher;' while the most nervous thought, uttered in more civilized tones, would have been esteemed 'unco weak.' We are speaking, of course, of very plain congregations; but among such 'a powerful preacher' means a preacher with a powerful voice and great physical energy.

Let not English readers imagine, when we speak of the vehemence of the Scotch pulpit, that we mean only a gentlemanly degree of warmth and energy. It often amounts to the most violent melo-dramatic acting. Sheil's Irish speeches would have been immensely popular Scotch sermons, so far as their style and delivery are concerned. The physical energy is tremendous. It is said that when Chalmers preached in St. George's, Edinburgh, the massive chandeliers, many feet off, were

all vibrating. He had often to stop, exhausted, in the midst of his sermon, and have a psalm sung till he recovered breath. Caird begins quietly, but frequently works himself up to a frantic excitement, in which his gestulation is of the wildest, and his voice an absolute howl. One feels afraid that he may burst a bloodvessel. Were his hearers cool enough to criticise him, the impression would be at an end; but he has wound them up to such a pitch that criticism is impossible. They must sit absolutely passive, with nerves tingling and blood pausing: frequently many of the congregation have started to their feet. It may be imagined how heavily the physical energies of the preacher are drawn upon by this mode of speaking. Dr. Bennie, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and one of the most eloquent and effective of Scotch pulpit orators, is said to have died at an age much short of fifty, worn out by the enthusiastic animation of his style. There are some little accessories of the Scotch pulpit, which in England are unknown: such as thrashing the large Bible which lies before the minister — long pauses to recover breath — much wiping of the face — sordid results to an unpleasant degree, necessitating an entire change of apparel after preaching.

The secret of the superior power over a mixed congregation of the best Scotch, as compared with most English preachers, is that the former are not deterred by any considerations of the dignity of the pulpit, from any oratorical art which is likely to produce an effect. Some times indeed, where better things might be expected, the most reprehensible clap-trap is resorted to. An English preacher is fettered and trammelled by fear of being thought fanatical and methodistical, — and still worse,

ungentlemanlike. He knows, too, that a reputation as a 'popular preacher' is not the thing which will conduce much to his preferment in his profession. The Scotch preacher, on the other hand, throws himself heart and soul into his subject. Chalmers overcame the notion that vehemence in the pulpit was indicative of either fanaticism or weakness of intellect : he made ultra-animation respectable : and earnestness, even in an excessive degree, is all in favour of a young preacher's popularity ; while a man's chance of the most valuable preferments (in the way of parochial livings) of the Scotch church, is in exact proportion to his popularity as a preacher. The spell of the greatest preachers is in their capacity of intense feeling. This is reflected on the congregation. A congregation will in most cases feel but a very inferior degree of the emotion which the preacher feels. But intense feeling is contagious. There is much in common between the tragic actor and the popular preacher ; but while the actor's power is generally the result of a studied elocution, the preacher's is almost always native. A teacher of elocution would probably say that the manner of Chalmers, Guthrie, or Caird was a very bad one ; but it suits the man, and no other would produce a like impression. In reading the most effective discourses of the greatest preachers, we are invariably disappointed. We can see nothing very particular in those quotations from Chalmers which are recorded as having so overwhelmingly impressed those who heard them. It was manner that did it all. In short, an accessory which in England is almost entirely neglected, is the secret of Scotch effect. Nor is it any derogation from an orator's genius to say that his power lies much less in what he says than in how he says it. It is but saying that his weapon can be

wielded by no other hand than his own. Manner makes the entire difference between Macready and the poorest stroller that murders Shakspeare. The matter is the same in the case of each. Each has the same thing to say ; the enormous difference lies in the manner in which each says it. The greatest effects recorded to have been produced by human language, have been produced by things which, in merely reading them, would not have appeared so very remarkable. Hazlitt tells us that nothing so lingered on his ear as a line from Home's *Douglas*, as spoken by young Betty : —

And happy, in my mind, was he that died.

We have heard it said that Macready never produced a greater effect than by the very simple words ‘ Who said that ? ’ It is perhaps a burlesque of an acknowledged fact, to record that Whitfield could thrill an audience by saying ‘ Mesopotamia ! ’ Hugh Miller tells us that he heard Chalmers read a piece which he (Miller) had himself written. It produced the effect of the most telling acting ; and its author never knew how fine it was till then. We remember well the feeling which ran through us when we heard Caird say, ‘ As we bend over the grave, where the dying are burying the dead.’ All this is the result of that gift of genius ; to feel with the whole soul and utter with the whole soul. The case of Gavazzi shows that tremendous energy can carry an audience away, without its understanding a syllable of what is said. Inferior men think by loud roaring and frantic gesticulation to produce that impression which genius alone can produce. But the counterfeit is wretched ; and with all intelligent people the result is derision and disgust.

Many of our readers, we daresay, have never witnessed the service of the Scotch Church. Its order is the simplest possible. A psalm is sung, the congregation *sitting*. A prayer of about a quarter of an hour in length is offered, the congregation *standing*. A chapter of the Bible is read; another psalm sung; then comes the sermon. A short prayer and a psalm follow; and the service is terminated by the benediction. The entire service lasts about an hour and a half. It is almost invariably conducted by a single clergyman. In towns, the churches now approximate pretty much to the English, as regards architecture. It is only in country places that one finds the true bareness of Presbytery. The main difference is that there is no altar; the communion table being placed in the body of the church. The pulpit occupies the altar end, and forms the most prominent object; symbolizing very accurately the relative estimation of the sermon in the Scotch service. Whenever a new church is built, the recurrence to a true ecclesiastical style is marked; and vaulted roofs, stained glass, and dark oak, have, in large towns, in a great degree, supplanted the flat-roofed meetinghouses which were the Presbyterian ideal. The preacher generally wears the English preaching gown. The old Geneva gown covered with *frogs* is hardly ever seen; but the surplice would still stir up a revolution. The service is performed with much propriety of demeanour; the singing is often so well done by a good choir, that the absence of the organ is hardly felt. Educated Scotchmen have come to lament the intolerant zeal which led the first Reformers in their country to such extremes. But in the country we still see the true genius of the Presbytery. The rustics walk into church with their hats on; and re

place them and hurry out the instant the service is over. The decorous prayer before and after worship is unknown. The minister, in many churches wears no gown. The stupid bigotry of the people in some of the most covenanting districts is almost incredible. There are parishes in which the people boast that they have never suffered so Romish a thing as a gown to appear in their pulpit; and the country people of Scotland generally regard Episcopacy as not a whit better than Popery.

It has sometimes struck us as curious, that the Scotch have always made such endeavours to have a voice in the selection of their clergy. Almost all the dissenters from the Church of Scotland hold precisely the same views both of doctrine and church government as the Church, and have seceded on points connected with the existence of lay patronage. In England much discontent may sometimes be excited by an arbitrary appointment to a living; but it would be vain to endeavour to excite a movement throughout the whole country to prevent the recurrence of such appointments. Yet upon precisely this point did some three or four hundred ministers secede from the Scotch Church in 1843; and to maintain the abstract right of congregations to a share in the appointment of their minister, has the 'Free Church' drawn from the humbler classes of a poor country many hundred thousand pounds. No doubt all this results in some measure from the self-sufficiency of the Scotch character; but besides this, it should be remembered that to a Scotchman it is a matter of much graver importance who shall be his clergyman than it is to an Englishman. In England, if the clergyman can but read decently, the congregation may find edification in listening to and joining in the beautiful prayers pro-

vided by the Church, even though the sermon should be poor enough. But in Scotland everything depends on the minister. If he be a fool, he can make the entire service as foolish as himself. For prayers, sermon, choice of passages of Scripture which are read, everything, the congregation is dependent on the preacher. The question, whether the worship to which the people of a parish are invited weekly shall be interesting and improving, or shall be absurd and revolting, is decided by the piety, good sense, and ability of the parish priest. Coleridge said he never knew the value of the Liturgy till he had heard the prayers which were offered in some remote country churches in Scotland.

We have not space to inquire into the circumstances which have given Scotch preaching its peculiar character. We may remark, however, that the sermon is the great feature of the Scotch service; it is the only attraction; and pains must be taken with it. The prayers are held in very secondary estimation. The preacher who aims at interesting his congregation, racks his brain to find what will startle and strike; and then the warmth of his delivery adds to his chance of keeping up attention. Then the Scotch are not a theatre-going people; they have not, thus, those stage-associations with a dramatic manner which would suggest themselves to many minds. Many likewise expect that excitement in the church, which is more suited to the atmosphere of the play-house. Patrons of late years not unfrequently allow a congregation to choose its own minister; the Crown almost invariably consults the people; the decided taste of almost all congregations is for great warmth of manner; and the supply is made to suit the demand.

As for the solemn question, how far Scotch preaching

answers the great end of all right preaching, it is hard to speak. No doubt it is a great thing to arouse the somewhat comatose attention of any audience to a discourse upon religion, and any means short of clap-trap and indecorum are justified if they succeed in doing so. No man will be informed or improved by a sermon which sets him asleep. Yet it is to be feared that, in the prevailing rage for what is striking and new, some eminent preachers sacrifice usefulness to glitter. We have heard discourses concerning which, had we been asked when they were over, What is the tendency and result of all this?—what is the conclusion it all leads to?—we should have been obliged to reply, Only that Mr. Such-a-one is an uncommonly clever man. The intellectual treat, likewise, of listening to first-class pulpit oratory, tends to draw many to church merely to enjoy it. Many go, not to be the better for the truth set forth, but to be delighted by the preacher's eloquence. And it is certain that many persons whose daily life exhibits no trace of religion, have been most regular and attentive hearers of the most striking preachers. We may mention an instance in point. When Mr. Caird was one of the ministers of Edinburgh, he preached in a church, one gallery of which is allotted to students of the University. A friend of ours was one Sunday afternoon in that gallery, when he observed in the pew before him two very rough-looking fellows, with huge walking-sticks projecting from their great-coat pockets, and all the unmistakable marks of medical students. It was evident they were little accustomed to attend any place of worship. The church, as usual, was crammed to suffocation, and Mr. Caird preached a most stirring sermon. As he wound up one paragraph to an

overwhelming climax, the whole congregation bent forward in eager and breathless silence. The medical students were under the general spell. Half rising from their seats they gazed at the preacher with open mouths. At length the burst was over, and a long sigh relieved the wrought-up multitude. The two students sank upon their seat, and looked at one another fixedly: and the first expressed his appreciation of the eloquence of what he had heard by exclaiming half aloud to his companion, '*Damn it, that's it.*'

The doctrine preached in Scotch pulpits is now almost invariably what is termed evangelical. For a long time, now long gone by, many of the clergy preached morality, with very inadequate views of Christian doctrine. We cannot but notice a misrepresentation of Dr. Hanna, in his *Life of Chalmers*. Without saying so, he leaves an impression that all the clergy of the *Moderate* or *Conservative* party in the Church held those semi-infidel views which Chalmers entertained in his early days. The case is by no means so. Very many ministers, not belonging to the *movement* party, held truly orthodox opinions, and did their pastoral work as faithfully as ever Chalmers did after his great change of sentiment. It is curious to know that while party feeling ran high in the Scotch Church, it was a shibboleth of the *Moderate* party to use the Lord's Prayer in the Church service. The other party rejected that beautiful compendium of all supplication, on the ground that it was not a Christian prayer, no mention being made in it of the doctrine of the atonement. It is recorded that on one occasion a minister of what was termed the '*High-flying*' party was to preach for Dr. Gilchrist, of the Canongate Church at Edinburgh. That venerable clergyman told his friend

before service that it was usual in the Canongate Church to make use of the Lord's Prayer at every celebration of worship. The friend looked somewhat disconcerted, and said, 'Is it absolutely necessary that I should give the Lord's Prayer?' 'Not at all,' was Dr. Gilchrist's reply, not at all, if you can give us anything better !'

Mr. Caird's sermon preached at Crathie has been published by royal command. It is no secret that the Queen and Prince, after hearing it, read it in manuscript, and expressed themselves no less impressed in reading it by the soundness of its views, than they had been in listening to it by its extraordinary eloquence. Our perusal of it has strongly confirmed us in the views we have expressed as to the share which Mr. Caird's manner has in producing the *effect* with which his discourses tell upon any audience. The sermon is indeed an admirable one ; accurate, and sometimes original in thought : illustrated with rare profusion of imagery, all in exquisite taste, and expressed in words scarcely one of which could be altered or displaced but for the worse. But Mr. Caird could not publish his voice and manner, and in wanting these, the sermon wants the first, second, and third things which conduced to its effect when delivered. In May, 1854, Mr. Caird preached this discourse in the High Church, Edinburgh, before the Commissioner who represents her Majesty at the meetings of the General Assembly of the Scotch Church, and an exceedingly crowded and brilliant audience. Given there, with all the skill of the most accomplished actor, yet with a simple earnestness which prevented the least suspicion of anything like acting, the impression it produced is described as something marvellous. Hard-headed Scotch lawyers, the last men in the world to be

carried into superlatives, declared that never till then did they understand what effect could be produced by human speech. But we confess that now we have these magic words to read quietly at home, we find it something of a task to get through them. A volume just published by Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh, the greatest pulpit orator of the 'Free Church,' contains many sermons much more likely to interest a reader.

The sermon is from the text, 'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'* It sets out thus:—

To combine business with religion, to keep up a spirit of serious piety amid the stir and distraction of a busy and active life,—this is one of the most difficult parts of a Christian's trial in this world. It is comparatively easy to be religious in the church—to collect our thoughts and compose our feelings, and enter, with an appearance of propriety and decorum, into the offices of religious worship, amidst the quietude of the Sabbath, and within the still and sacred precincts of the house of prayer. But to be religious in the world—to be pious and holy and earnest-minded in the counting-room, the manufactory, the market-place, the field, the farm—to carry our good and solemn thoughts and feelings into the throng and thoroughfare of daily life,—this is the great difficulty of our Christian calling. No man not lost to all moral influence can help feeling his worldly passions calmed, and some measure of seriousness stealing over his mind, when engaged in the performance of the more awful and serious rites of religion; but the atmosphere of the domestic circle, the exchange, the street, the city's throng, amidst coarse work and cankering cares and toils, is a very different atmosphere from that of a communion-table. Passing from one to the other has often seemed as the sudden transition from a tropical to a polar climate—from balmy warmth and sunshine to murky mist and freezing cold. And it appears sometimes as difficult to maintain the strength and steadfastness of religious principle and feeling when we go forth from the church to the world, as it would be to preserve an exotic alive in the open air in winter, or to keep the lamp that burns steadily within doors from being blown out if you take it abroad unsheltered from the wind.

* *Romans* xii. 11.

The preacher then speaks of the shifts by which men have evaded the task of being holy, at once in the church and in the world; in ancient times by flying from the world altogether, in modern times by making religion altogether a Sunday thing. In opposition to either notion the text suggests,—

That piety is not for Sundays only, but for all days; that spirituality of mind is not appropriate to one set of actions, and an impertinence and intrusion with reference to others; but like the act of breathing, like the circulation of the blood, like the silent growth of the stature, a process that may be going on simultaneously with all our actions—when we are busiest as when we are idlest; in the church, in the world; in solitude, in society; in our grief and in our gladness; in our toil and in our rest; sleeping, waking; by day, by night; amidst all the engagements and exigencies of life.

The burden of the discourse is to prove that this is so; that religion is compatible with the business of Common Life. This appears, *first*, because religion, as a *science*, sets out doctrines easy to be understood by the humblest intellects; and as an *art*, sets out duties which may be practised simultaneously with all other work. It is the *art of being and of doing good*: and for this art every profession and calling affords scope and discipline.

When a child is learning to write, it matters not of what words the copy set to him is composed, the thing desired being that, whatever he writes, he learns to write *well*. When a man is learning to be a Christian, it matters not what his particular work in life may be, the work he does is but the copy-line set to him; the main thing to be considered is that he learn to live well.

The *second* consideration by which Mr. Caird supports his thesis is, that religion consists, *not so much in doing spiritual or sacred acts, as in doing secular acts from a sacred or spiritual motive*. ‘A man may be a Christian

thinker and writer as much when giving to science, or history, or biography, or poetry a Christian tone and spirit, as when composing sermons or writing hymns.'

The third and most eloquent division of the discourse illustrates the thesis from the *Mind's Power of acting on Latent Principles*. Though we cannot, in our worldly work, be always consciously thinking of religion, yet unconsciously, insensibly, we may be acting under its ever present control. For example, the preacher, amidst all his mental exertions, has underneath the outward workings of his mind, the latent thought of the presence of his auditory.

Like a secret atmosphere it surrounds and bathes his spirit as he goes on with the external work. And have not you, too, my friends, an Auditor—it may be, a 'great cloud of witnesses'—but at least one all glorious Witness and Listener ever present, ever watchful, as the discourse of life proceeds? Why, then, in this case too, while the outward business is diligently prosecuted, may there not be on your spirit a latent and constant impression of that awful inspection? What worldly work so absorbing as to leave no room in a believer's spirit for the hallowing thought of that glorious Presence ever near?

We shall give but one extract more, the final illustration of this third *head of discourse*. It is a very good specimen of one of those exciting and irresistible bursts by which Caird sweeps away his audience. Imagine the following sentences given, at first quietly, but with great feeling, gradually waxing in energy and rapidity; and at length, amid dead stillness and hushed breaths, concluded as with a torrent's rush:—

Or, have we not all felt that the *thought of anticipated happiness* may blend itself with the work of our busiest hours? The labourer's coming, released from toil—the schoolboy's coming holiday, or the hard-wrought business man's approaching season of relaxation—the expected return of a long absent and much loved friend; is not the

thought of these, or similar joyous events, one which often intermingles with, without interrupting, our common work? When a father goes forth to his 'labour till the evening,' perhaps often, very often, in the thick of his toils the thought of home may start up to cheer him. The smile that is to welcome him, as he crosses his lowly threshold when the work of the day is over, the glad faces, and merry voices, and sweet caresses of little ones, as they shall gather round him in the quiet evening hours, the thought of all this may dwell, a latent joy, a hidden motive, deep down in his heart of hearts, may come rushing in a sweet solace at every pause of exertion, and act like a secret oil to smooth the wheels of labour. The heart has a secret treasury, where our hopes and joys are often garnered, too precious to be parted with, even for a moment.

And why may not the highest of all hopes and joys possess the same all-pervading influence? Have we, if our religion is real, no anticipation of happiness in the glorious future? Is there no 'rest that remaineth for the people of God,' no home and loving heart awaiting us when the toils of our hurried day of life are ended? What is earthly rest or relaxation, what the release from toil after which we so often sigh, but the faint shadow of the saint's everlasting rest, the rest of the soul in God? What visions of earthly bliss can ever, if our Christian faith be not a form, compare with 'the glory soon to be revealed?' What glory of earthly reunion with the rapture of that hour when the heavens shall yield an absent Lord to our embrace, to be parted from us no more for ever! And if all this be most sober truth, what is there to except this joyful hope from that law to which, in all other deep joys, our minds are subject? Why may we not, in this case too, think often, amidst our worldly work, of the House to which we are going, of the true and loving heart that beats for us, and of the sweet and joyous welcome that awaits us there? And even when we make them not, of set purpose, the subject of our thoughts, is there not enough of grandeur in the objects of a believer's hope to pervade his spirit at all times with a calm and reverential joy? Do not think all this strange, fanatical, impossible. If it do seem so, it can only be because your heart is in the earthly, but not in the higher and holier hopes. No, my friends! the strange thing is, not that amidst the world's work we should be able to think of our House, but that we should ever be able to forget it; and the stranger, sadder still, that while the little day of life is passing — morning, noontide, evening — each stage more rapid than the last; while to many the shadows are already fast lengthening, and the declining sun warns them that 'the night is at hand, wherein no man can work,' there should be those amongst us whose whole thoughts are absorbed

in the business of the world, and to whom the reflection never occurs, that soon they must go out into eternity, without a friend, without a home!

The discourse thus ends in orthodox Scotch fashion, with a practical conclusion.

We think it not unlikely that the sermon has been *toned down* a good deal before publication, in anticipation of severe criticism. Some passages which were very effective when delivered, have probably been modified so as to bring them more thoroughly within the limits of severe good taste. We think Mr. Caird has deserved the honours done him by royalty; and we willingly accord him his meed, as a man of no small force of intellect, of great power of illustration by happy analogies, of sincere piety, and of much earnestness to do good. He is still young — we believe considerably under forty — and much may be expected of him.

But we have rambled on into an unduly long gossip about Scotch preaching, and must abruptly conclude. We confess that it would please us to see, especially in the pulpits of our country churches, a little infusion of its warmth, rejecting anything of its extravagance.



CHAPTER XIII.

CONCERNING FUTURE YEARS.

DOES it ever come across you, my friend, with something of a start, that things cannot always go on in your lot as they are going now? Does not a sudden thought sometimes flash upon you, a hasty, vivid glimpse, of what you will be long hereafter, if you are spared in this world? Our common way is too much to think that things will always go on as they are going. Not that we clearly think so: not that we ever put that opinion in a definite shape, and avow to ourselves that we hold it: but we live very much under that vague, general impression. We can hardly help it. When a man of middle age inherits a pretty country scat, and makes up his mind that he cannot yet afford to give up business and go to live at it, but concludes that in six or eight years he will be able with justice to his children to do so, do you think he brings plainly before him the changes which must be wrought on himself and those around him by these years? I do not speak of the greatest change of all, which may come to any of us so very soon: I do not think of what may be done by unlooked-for accident: I think merely of what must be done by the passing on of time. I think of pos-

sible changes in taste and feeling, of possible loss of liking for that mode of life. I think of lungs that will play less freely, and of limbs that will suggest shortened walks, and dissuade from climbing hills. I think how the children will have outgrown daisy-chains, or even got beyond the season of climbing trees. The middle-aged man enjoys the prospect of the time when he shall go to his country house; and the vague, undefined belief surrounds him, like an atmosphere, that he and his children, his views and likings, will be then just such as they are now. He cannot bring it home to him at how many points change will be cutting into him, and hedging him in, and paring him down. And we all live very much under that vague impression. Yet it is in many ways good for us to feel that we are going on — passing from the things which surround us — advancing into the undefined future, into the unknown land. And I think that sometimes we all have vivid flashes of such a conviction. I dare say, my friend, you have seen an old man, frail, soured, and shabby, and you have thought, with a start, Perhaps *there* is Myself of Future Years.

We human beings can stand a great deal. There is great margin allowed by our constitution, physical and moral. I suppose there is no doubt that a man may daily for years eat what is unwholesome, breathe air which is bad, or go through a round of life which is not the best or the right one for either body or mind, and yet be little the worse. And so men pass through great trials and through long years, and yet are not altered so very much. The other day, walking along the street, I saw a man whom I had not seen for ten years. I knew that since I saw him last he had gone through very heavy troubles, and that these had sat very heavily upon him. I remem-

bered how he had lost that friend who was the dearest to him of all human beings, and I knew how broken down he had been for many months after that great sorrow came. Yet there he was, walking along, an unnoticed unit, just like any one else ; and he was looking wonderfully well. No doubt he seemed pale, worn, and anxious : but he was very well and carefully dressed ; he was walking with a brisk, active step ; and I dare say in feeling pretty well reconciled to being what he is, and to the circumstances amid which he is living. Still, one felt that somehow a tremendous change had passed over him. I felt sorry for him, and all the more that he did not seem to feel sorry for himself. It made me sad to think that some day I should be like him ; that perhaps in the eyes of my juniors I look like him already, careworn and ageing. I dare say in his feeling there was no such sense of falling off. Perhaps he was tolerably content. He was walking so fast, and looking so sharp, that I am sure he had no desponding feeling at the time. Despondency goes with slow movements and with vague looks. The sense of having materially fallen off is destructive to the eagle-eye. Yes, he was tolerably content. We can go down-hill cheerfully, save at the points where it is sharply brought home to us that we are going down-hill. Lately I sat at dinner opposite an old lady who had the remains of striking beauty. I remember how much she interested me. Her hair was false, her teeth were false, her complexion was shrivelled, her form had lost the round symmetry of earlier years, and was angular and stiff ; yet how cheerful and lively she was ! She had gone far down-hill physically ; but either she did not feel her decadence, or she had grown quite reconciled to it. Her daughter, a

blooming matron, was there, happy, wealthy, good; yet not apparently a whit more reconciled to life than the aged grardame. It was pleasing, and yet it was sad, to see how well we can make up our mind to what is inevitable. And such a sight brings up to one a glimpse of Future Years. The cloud seems to part before one, and through the rift you discern your earthly track far away, and a jaded pilgrim plodding along it with weary step, and though the pilgrim does not look like you, yet you know the pilgrim is yourself.

This cannot always go on. To what is it all tending? I am not thinking now of an out-look so grave, that this is not the place to discuss it. But I am thinking how everything is going on. In this world there is no standing still. And everything that belongs entirely to this world, its interests and occupations, is going on towards a conclusion. It will all come to an end. It cannot go on forever. I cannot always be writing sermons as I do now, and going on in this regular course of life. I cannot always be writing essays. The day will come when I shall have no more to say, or when the readers of the Magazine will no longer have patience to listen to me in that kind fashion in which they have listened so long. I foresee it plainly, this evening, — even while writing my first essay for the *Atlantic Monthly*, the time when the reader shall open the familiar cover, and glance at the table of contents, and exclaim indignantly, ‘Here is that tiresome person again with the four initials: why will he not cease to weary us?’ I write in sober sadness, my friend: I do not intend any jest. If you do not know that what I have written is certainly true, you have not lived very long. You have not learned the sorrowful

lesson, that all worldly occupations and interests are wearing to their close. You cannot keep up the old thing, however much you may wish to do so. You know how vain anniversaries for the most part are. You meet with certain old friends, to try to revive the old days ; but the spirit of the old time will not come over you. It is not a spirit that can be raised at will. It cannot go on forever, that walking down to church on Sundays, and ascending those pulpit steps ; it will change to feeling, though I humbly trust it may be long before it shall change in fact. Don't you all sometimes feel something like that ? Don't you sometimes look about you and say to yourself, That furniture will wear out : those window-curtains are getting sadly faded ; they will not last a lifetime ? Those carpets must be replaced some day ; and the old patterns which looked at you with a kindly, familiar expression, through these long years, must be among the old familiar faces that are gone. These are little things, indeed, but they are among the vague recollections that bewilder our memory ; they are among the things which come up in the strange, confused remembrance of the dying man in the last days of life. There is an old fir-tree, a twisted, strange-looking fir-tree, which will be among my last recollections, I know, as it was among my first. It was always before my eyes when I was three, four, five years old : I see the pyramidal top, rising over a mass of shrubbery ; I see it always against a sunset-sky ; always in the subdued twilight in which we seem to see things in distant years. These old friends will die, you think ; who will take their place ? You will be an old gentleman, a frail old gentleman, wondered at by younger men, and telling them long stories about the days when Lincoln was President, like

those which weary you now about the Declaration of Independence. It will not be the same world then. Your children will not be always children. Enjoy their fresh youth while it lasts, for it will not last long. Do not skim over the present too fast, through a constant habit of onward-looking. Many men of an anxious turn are so eagerly concerned in providing for the future, that they hardly remark the blessings of the present. Yet it is only because the future will some day be present, that it deserves any thought at all. And many men, instead of heartily enjoying present blessings while they are present, train themselves to a habit of regarding these things as merely the foundation on which they are to build some vague fabric of they know not what. I have known a clergyman, who was very fond of music, and in whose church the music was very fine, who seemed incapable of enjoying its solemn beauty as a thing to be enjoyed while passing, but who persisted in regarding each beautiful strain merely as a promising indication of what his choir would come at some future time to be. It is a very bad habit, and one which grows unless repressed. You, my reader, when you see your children racing on the green, train yourself to regard all that as a happy end in itself. Do not grow to think merely that those sturdy young limbs promise to be stout and serviceable when they are those of a grown-up man ; and rejoice in the smooth little forehead with its curly hair, without any forethought of how it is to look some day when overshadowed (as it is sure to be) by the great wig of the Lord Chancellor. Good advice : let us all try to take it. Let all happy things be enjoyed as ends, as well as regarded as means. Yet it is in the make of our nature to be ever onward-looking ; and we cannot help it.

When you get the first number for the year of the Magazine which you take in, you instinctively think of it as the first portion of a new volume ; and you are conscious of a certain though slight restlessness in the thought of a thing incomplete, and of a wish that you had the volume completed. And sometimes, thus looking onward into the future, you worry yourself with little thoughts and cares. There is that old dog : you have had him for many years ; he is growing stiff and frail ; what are you to do when he dies ? When he is gone, the new dog you get will never be like him ; he may be, indeed, a far handsomer and more amiable animal, but he will not be your old companion ; he will not be surrounded with all those old associations, not merely with your own by-past life, but with the lives, the faces, and the voices of those who have left you, which invest with a certain sacredness even that humble but faithful friend. He will not have been the companion of your youthful walks, when you went at a pace which now you cannot attain. He will just be a common dog ; and who that has reached your years cares for *that* ? The other indeed was a dog too, but that was merely the substratum on which was accumulated a host of recollections : it is *Auld Lang syne* that walks into your study when your shaggy friend of ten summers comes stiffly in, and after many querulous turnings lays himself down on the rug before the fire. Do you not feel the like when you look at many little matters, and then look into the Future Years ? That harness—how will you replace it ? It will be a pang to throw it by, and it will be a considerable expense too to get a new suit. Then you think how long harness may continue to be serviceable. I once saw, on a pair of horses drawing a stage-coach among the

hills, a set of harness which was thirty-five years old. It had been very costly and grand when new; it had belonged for some of its earliest years to a certain wealthy nobleman. The nobleman had been for many years in his grave, but there was his harness still. It was tremendously patched, and the blinkers were of extraordinary aspect; but it was quite serviceable. There is comfort for you, poor country parsons! How thoroughly I understand your feeling about such little things. I know how you sometimes look at your phaeton or your dog-cart; and even while the morocco is fresh, and the wheels still are running with their first tires, how you think you see it after it has grown shabby and old-fashioned. Yes, you remember, not without a dull kind of pang, that it is wearing out. You have a neighbour, perhaps, a few miles off, whose conveyance, through the wear of many years, has become remarkably seedy; and every time you meet it you think that there you see your own, as it will some day be. Every dog has his day: but the day of the rational dog is overclouded in a fashion unknown to his inferior fellow-creature; it is overclouded by the anticipation of the coming day which will not be his. You remember how that great though morbid man, John Foster, could not heartily enjoy the summer weather, for thinking how every sunny day that shone upon him was a downward step towards the winter gloom. Each indication that the season was progressing, even though progressing as yet only to greater beauty, filled him with great grief. 'I have seen a fearful sight to-day,' he would say, 'I have seen a buttercup.' And we know, of course, that in his case there was nothing like affectation; it was only that, unhappily for himself, the bent of his mind was so onward-

looking, that he saw only a premonition of the snows of December in the roses of June. It would be a blessing if we could quite discard the tendency. And while your trap runs smoothly and noiselessly, while the leather is fresh and the paint unscratched, do not worry yourself with visions of the day when it will rattle and crack, and when you will make it wait for you at the corner of backstreets when you drive into town. Do not vex yourself by fancying that you will never have heart to send off the old carriage, nor by wondering where you shall find the money to buy a new one.

Have you ever read the *Life of Mansie Wauch, Tailor in Dalkeith*, by that pleasing poet and most amiable man, the late David Macbeth Moir? I have been looking into it lately; and I have regretted much that the Lowland Scotch dialect is so imperfectly understood in England, and that even where so far understood its raciness is so little felt; for great as is the popularity of that work, it is much less known than it deserves to be. Only a Scotchman can thoroughly appreciate it. It is curious, and yet it is not curious, to find the pathos and the polish of one of the most touching and elegant of poets in the man who has with such irresistible humour, sometimes approaching to the farcical, delineated humble Scotch life. One passage in the book always struck me very much. We have in it the poet as well as the humorist; and it is a perfect example of what I have been trying to describe in the pages which you have read. I mean the passage in which Mansie tells us of a sudden glimpse which, in circumstances of mortal terror, he once had of the future. On a certain 'awful night' the tailor was awakened by cries of alarm, and, looking out, he saw the next house to his own was on fire from cellar to garret.

The earnings of poor Mansie's whole life were laid out on his stock in trade and his furniture, and it appeared likely that these would be at once destroyed.

"Then," says he, "the darkness of the latter days came over my spirit like a vision before the prophet Isaiah; and I could see nothing in the years to come but beggary and starvation, — myself a fallen-back old man, with an out-at-the-elbows coat, a greasy hat, and a bald brow, hirpling over a staff, requeeshting an awmous: Nanse a broken-hearted beggar-wife, torn down to tatters, and weeping like Rachel when she thought on better days; and poor wee Benjie going from door to door with a meal-pock on his back."

Ah, there is exquisite pathos *there*, as well as humour; but the thing for which I have quoted that sentence is its startling truthfulness. You have all done what Mansie Wauch did, I know. Every one has his own way of doing it, and it is his own especial picture which each sees; but there has appeared to us, as to Mansie, (I must recur to my old figure,) as it were a sudden rift in the clouds that conceal the future, and we have seen the way, far ahead — the dusty way — and an aged pilgrim pacing slowly along it; and in that aged figure we have each recognized our own young self. How often have I sat down on the mossy wall that surrounded my churchyard, when I had more time for reverie than I have now — sat upon the mossy wall, under a great oak, whose branches came low down and projected far out — and looked at the rough gnarled bark, and at the passing river, and at the belfry of the little church, and there and then thought of Mansie Wauch and of his vision of Future Years! How often in these hours, or in long solitary walks and rides among the hills, have I had visions clear as that

of Mansie Wauch, of how I should grow old in my country parish ! Do not think that I wish or intend to be egotistical, my friendly reader. I describe these feelings and fancies because I think this is the likeliest way in which to reach and describe your own. There was a rapid little stream that flowed, in a very lonely place between the highway and a cottage to which I often went to see a poor old woman ; and when I came out of the cottage, having made sure that no one saw me, I always took a great leap over the little stream, which saved going round a little way. And never once, for several years, did I thus cross it without seeing a picture as clear to the mind's eye as Mansie Wauch's — a picture which made me walk very thoughtfully along for the next mile or two. It was curious to think how one was to get through the accustomed duty after having grown old and frail. The day would come when the brook could be crossed in that brisk fashion no more. It must be an odd thing for the parson to walk as an old man into the pulpit, still his own, which was his own when he was a young man of six-and-twenty. What a crowd of old remembrances must be present each Sunday to the clergyman's mind, who has served the same parish and preached in the same church for fifty years ! Personal identity, continued through the successive stages of life, is a commonplace thing to think of ; but when it is brought home to your own case and feeling, it is a very touching and a very bewildering thing. There are the same trees and hills as when you were a boy ; and when each of us comes to his last days in this world, how short a space it will seem since we were little children ! Let us humbly hope, that, in that brief space parting the cradle from the grave, we may (by help from above) have accom

plished a certain work which will cast its blessed influence over all the years and all the ages before us. Yet it remains a strange thing to look forward and to see yourself with grey hair, and not much even of that; to see your wife an old woman, and your little boy or girl grown up into manhood or womanhood. It is more strange still to fancy you see them all going on as usual in the round of life, and you no longer among them. You see your empty chair. There is your writing-table and your inkstand; there are your books, not so carefully arranged as they used to be; perhaps, on the whole, less indication than you might have hoped that they miss you. All this is strange when you bring it home to your own case; and that hundreds of millions have felt the like makes it none the less strange to you. The commonplaces of life and death are not commonplace when they befall ourselves. It was in desperate hurry and agitation that Mansie Wauch saw his vision; and in like circumstances you may have yours too. But for the most part such moods come in leisure—in saunterings through the autumn woods—in reveries by the winter fire.

I do not think, thus musing upon our occasional glimpses of the Future, of such fancies as those of early youth—fancies and anticipations of greatness, of felicity, of fame; I think of the onward views of men approaching middle-age, who have found their place and their work in life, and who may reasonably believe that, save for great unexpected accidents, there will be no very material change in their lot till that “change come” to which Job looked forward four thousand years since. There are great numbers of educated folk who are likely always to live in the same kind of house, to have the same establishment, to associate with the same class of people, to walk

along the same streets, to look upon the same hills, as long as they live. The only change will be the gradual one which will be wrought by advancing years.

And the onward view of such people in such circumstances is generally a very vague one. It is only now and then that there comes the startling clearness of prospect so well set forth by Mansie Wauch. Yet sometimes when such a vivid view comes, it remains for days and is a painful companion of your solitude. Don't you remember, clerical reader of thirty-two, having seen a good deal of an old parson, rather sour in aspect, rather shabby-looking, sadly pinched for means, and with powers dwarfed by the sore struggle with the world to maintain his family and to keep up a respectable appearance upon his limited resources ; perhaps with his mind made petty and his temper spoiled by the little worries, the petty malignant tattle and gossip and occasional insolence of a little backbiting village ? and don't you remember how for days you felt haunted by a sort of nightmare that there was what you would be, if you lived so long ? Yes ; you know how there have been times when for ten days together that jarring thought would intrude, whenever your mind was disengaged from work ; and sometimes, when you went to bed, that thought kept you awake for hours. You knew the impression was morbid, and you were angry with yourself for your silliness ; but you could not drive it away.

It makes a great difference in the prospect of Future Years, if you are one of those people who, even after middle age, may still make a great rise in life. This will prolong the restlessness which in others is sobered down at forty : it will extend the period during which you will every now and then have brief seasons of fever-

ish anxiety, hope, and fear, followed by longer stretches of blank disappointment. And it will afford the opportunity of experiencing a vividly new sensation, and of turning over a quite new leaf, after most people have settled to the jog-trot at which the remainder of the pilgrimage is to be covered. A clergyman of the Church of England may be made a bishop, and exchange a quiet rectory for a palace. No doubt the increase of responsibility is to a conscientious man almost appalling; but surely the rise in life is great. There you are, one of four-and-twenty, selected out of near twenty thousand. It is possible, indeed, that you may feel more reason for shame than for elation at the thought. A barrister unknown to fame, but of respectable standing, may be made a judge. Such a man may even, if he gets into the groove, be gradually pushed on till he reaches an eminence which probably surprises himself as much as any one else. A good speaker in Parliament may at sixty or seventy be made a Cabinet Minister. And we can all imagine what indescribable pride and elation must in such cases possess the wife and daughters of the man who has attained this decided step in advance. I can say sincerely that I never saw human beings walk with so airy tread, and evince so fussily their sense of a greatness more than mortal, as the wife and the daughter of an amiable but not able bishop I knew in my youth, when they came to church on the Sunday morning on which the good man preached for the first time in his lawn sleeves. Their heads were turned for the time; but they gradually came right again, as the ladies became accustomed to the summits of human affairs. Let it be said for the bishop himself, that there was not a vestige of that sense of elevation about *him*. He looked perfectly modest and unaffected. His dress was remarka-

bly ill put on, and his sleeves stuck out in the most awkward fashion ever assumed by drapery. I suppose that sometimes these rises in life come very unexpectedly. I have heard of a man who, when he received a letter from the Prime Minister of the day offering him a place of great dignity, thought the letter was a hoax, and did not notice it for several days. You could not certainly infer from his modesty what has proved to be the fact, that he has filled his place admirably well. The possibility of such material changes must no doubt tend to prolong the interest in life, which is ready to flag as years go on. But perhaps with the majority of men the level is found before middle age, and no very great worldly change awaits them. The path stretches on, with its ups and downs; and they only hope for strength for the day. But in such men's lot of humble duty and quiet content there remains room for many fears. All human beings who are as well off as they can ever be, and so who have little room for hope, seem to be liable to the invasion of great fear as they look into the future. It seems to be so with kings, and with great nobles. Many such have lived in a nervous dread of change, and have ever been watching the signs of the times with apprehensive eyes. Nothing that can happen can well make such better; and so they suffer from the vague foreboding of something which will make them worse. And the same law reaches to those in whom hope is narrowed down, not by the limit of grand possibility, but of little, — not by the fact that they have got all that mortal can get, but by the fact that they have got the little which is all that Providence seems to intend to give to *them*. And, indeed, there is something that is almost awful, when your affairs are all going happily, when your mind is clear and equal to its work, when your bodily health is unbroken,

when your home is pleasant, when your income is ample, when your children are healthy and merry and hopeful, — in looking on to Future Years. The more happy you are, the more there is of awe in the thought how frail are the foundations of your earthly happiness, — what havoe may be made of them by the chances of even a single day. It is no wonder that the solemnity and awfulness of the Future have been felt so much, that the languages of Northern Europe have, as I dare say you know, no word which expresses the essential notion of Futurity. You think, perhaps, of *shall* and *will*. Well, these words have come now to convey the notion of Futurity ; but they do so only in a secondary fashion. Look to their etymology, and you will see that they *imply* Futurity, but do not *express* it. *I shall* do such a thing means *I am bound to do it, I am under an obligation to do it. I will* do such a thing means *I intend to do it, It is my present purpose to do it*. Of course, if you are under an obligation to do anything, or if it be your intention to do anything, the probability is that the thing will be done ; but the Northern family of languages ventures no nearer than *that* towards the expression of the bare, awful idea of Future Time. It was no wonder that Mr. Croaker was able to cast a gloom upon the gayest eirele; and the happiest conjuncture of circumstances, by wishing that all might be as well that day six months. Six months ! What might that time not do ? Perhaps you have not read a little poem of Barry Cornwall's, the idea of which must come home to the heart of most of us : —

Touch us gently, Time !
 Let us glide adown thy stream
 Gently, — as we sometimes glide
 Through a quiet dream.

Humble voyagers are we,
 Husband, wife, and children three —
 One is lost, — an angel, fled
 To the azure overhead.
 Touch us gently, Time!
 We've not proud nor soaring wings:
 Our ambition, our content,
 Lies in simple things.
 Humble voyagers are we,
 O'er life's dim, unsounded sea,
 Seeking only some calm clime: —
 Touch us gently, gentle Time!

I know that sometimes, my friend, you will not have much sleep, if, when you lay your head on your pillow, you begin to think how much depends upon your health and life. You have reached now that time at which you value life and health not so much for their service to yourself, as for their needfulness to others. There is a petition familiar to me in this Scotch country, where people make their prayers for themselves, which seems to me to possess great solemnity and force, when we think of all that is implied in it. It is, *Spare useful lives!* One life, the slender line of blood passing into and passing out of one human heart, may decide the question, whether wife and children shall grow up affluent, refined, happy, yes, and *good*, or be reduced to hard straits, with all the manifold evils which grow of poverty in the case of those who have been reduced to it after knowing other things. You often think, I doubt not, in quiet hours, what would become of your children, if you were gone. You have done, I trust, what you can to care for them, even from your grave: you think sometimes of a poetical figure of speech amid the dry technical phrases of English law: you know what is meant by the law of *Mortmain*; and you like to think that even your *dead*

hand may be felt to be kindly intermeddling yet in the affairs of those who were your dearest: that some little sum, slender, perhaps, but as liberal as you could make it, may come in periodically when it is wanted, and seem like the gift of a thoughtful heart and a kindly hand which are far away. Yes, cut down your present income to any extent, that you may make some provision for your children after you are dead. You do not wish that they should have the saddest of all reasons for taking care of you, and trying to lengthen out your life. But even after you have done everything which your small means permit, you will still think, with an anxious heart, of the possibilities of Future Years. A man or woman who has children has very strong reason for wishing to live as long as may be, and has no right to trifle with health or life. And sometimes, looking out into days to come, you think of the little things, hitherto so free from man's heritage of care, as they may some day be. You see them shabby, and early anxious: can *that* be the little boy's rosy face, now so pale and thin? You see them in a poor room, in which you recognize your study chairs, with the hair coming out of the cushions, and a carpet which you remember now threadbare and in holes.

It is no wonder at all that people are so anxious about money. Money means every desirable material thing on earth, and the manifold immaterial things which come of material possessions. Poverty is the most comprehensive earthly evil; all conceivable evils, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, may come of *that*. Of course, great temptations attend its opposite; and the wise man's prayer will be what it was long ago — 'Give me neither poverty nor riches.' But let us have no nonsense talked about money being of no consequence. The want of it has made many

a father and mother tremble at the prospect of being taken from their children; the want of it has embittered many a parent's dying hours. You hear selfish persons talking vaguely about faith. You find such heartless persons jauntily spending all they get on themselves, and then leaving their poor children to beggary, with the miserable pretext that they are doing all this through their abundant trust in God. Now this is not faith; it is insolent presumption. It is exactly as if a man should jump from the top of St. Paul's, and say that he had faith that the Almighty would keep him from being dashed to pieces on the pavement. There is a high authority as to such cases — 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' If God had promised that people should never fall into the miseries of penury under any circumstances, it would be faith to trust that promise, however unlikely of fulfilment it might seem in any particular case. But God has made no such promise; and if you leave your children without provision, you have no right to expect that they shall not suffer the natural consequences of your heartlessness and thoughtlessness. True faith lies in your doing everything you possibly can, and *then* humbly trusting in God. And if, after you have done your very best, you must still go, with but a blank outlook for those you leave, why, *then*, you may trust them to the Husband of the widow and Father of the fatherless. Faith, as regards such matters, means firm belief that God will do all he has promised to do, however difficult or unlikely. But some people seem to think that faith means firm belief that God will do whatever they think would suit them, however unreasonable, and however flatly in the face of all the established laws of His government.

We all have it in our power to make ourselves miserable, if we look far into future years and calculate their probabilities of evil, and steadily anticipate the worst. It is not expedient to calculate too far a-head. Of course, the right way in this, as in other things, is the middle way: we are not to run either into the extreme of over-carefulness and anxiety on the one hand, or of recklessness and imprudence on the other. But as mention has been made of faith, it may safely be said that we are forgetful of that rational trust in God which is at once our duty and our inestimable privilege, if we are always looking out into the future, and vexing ourselves with endless fears as to how things are to go then. There is no divine promise, that, if a reckless blockhead leaves his children to starve, they shall not starve. And a certain inspired volume speaks with extreme severity of the man who fails to provide for them of his own house. But there *is* a divine promise which says to the humble Christian, — ‘As thy days, so shall thy strength be.’ If your affairs are going on fairly now, be thankful, and try to do your duty, and to do your best, as a Christian man and a prudent man, and then leave the rest to God. Your children are about you; no doubt they may die, and it is fit enough that you should not forget the fragility of your most prized possessions; it is fit enough that you should sometimes sit by the fire and look at the merry faces and listen to the little voices, and think what it would be to lose them. But it is not needful, or rational, or Christian-like, to be always brooding on that thought. And when they grow up, it may be hard to provide for them. The little thing that is sitting on your knee may before many years be alone in life, thousands of miles from you and from his early home, an insignificant item in the bitter price, which

Britain pays for her Indian Empire. It is even possible, though you hardly for a moment admit *that* thought, that the child may turn out a heartless and wicked man, and prove your shame and heart-break ; all wicked and heartless men have been the children of somebody ; and many of them, doubtless, the children of those who surmised the future as little as Eve did when she smiled upon the infant Cain. And the fireside by which you sit, now merry and noisy enough, may grow lonely, — lonely with the second loneliness, not the hopeful solitude of youth looking forward, but the desponding loneliness of age looking back. And it is so with everything else. Your health may break down. Some fearful accident may befall you. The readers of the magazine may cease to care for your articles. People may get tired of your sermons. People may stop buying your books, your wine, your groceries, your milk and cream. Younger men may take away your legal business. Yet how often these fears prove utterly groundless ! It was good and wise advice given by one who had managed, with a cheerful and hopeful spirit, to pass through many trying and anxious years, to ‘take short views :’ — not to vex and worry yourself by planning too far a-head. And a wiser than the wise and cheerful Sydney Smith had anticipated his philosophy. You remember Who said, ‘Take no thought,’ — that is, no over-anxious and over-careful thought — ‘for the morrow ; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.’ Did you ever sail over a blue summer sea towards a mountainous coast, frowning, sullen, gloomy : and have you not seen the gloom retire before you as you advanced ; the hills, grim in the distance, stretch into sunny slopes when you neared them ; and the waters smile in cheerful light that looked so black

when they were far away? And who is there that has not seen the parallel in actual life? We have all known the anticipated ills of life — the danger that looked so big, the duty that looked so arduous, the entanglement that we could not see our way through — prove to have been nothing more than spectres on the far horizon; and when at length we reached them, all their difficulty had vanished into air, leaving us to think what fools we had been for having so needlessly conjured up phantoms to disturb our quiet. Yes, there is no doubt of it, a very great part of all we suffer in this world is from the apprehension of things that never come. I remember well how a dear friend, whom I (and many more) lately lost, told me many times of his fears as to what he would do in a certain contingency which both he and I thought was quite sure to come sooner or later. I know that the anticipation of it caused him some of the most anxious hours of a very anxious, though useful and honoured life. How vain his fears proved! He was taken from this world before what he had dreaded had cast its most distant shadow. Well, let me try to discard the notion which has been sometimes worrying me of late, that perhaps I have written nearly as many essays as any one will care to read. Don't let any of us give way to fears which may prove to have been entirely groundless.

And then, if we are really spared to see those trials we sometimes think of, and which it is right that we should sometimes think of, the strength for them will come at the time. They will not look nearly so black, and we shall be enabled to bear them bravely. There is in human nature a marvellous power of accommodation to circumstances. We can gradually make up our mind to almost anything. If this were a sermon instead of an

essay, I should explain my theory of how this comes to be. I see in all this something beyond the mere natural instinct of acquiescence in what is inevitable; something beyond the benevolent law in the human mind, that it shall adapt itself to whatever circumstances it may be placed in; something beyond the doing of the gentle comforter Time. Yes, it is wonderful what people can go through, wonderful what people can get reconciled to. I dare say my friend Smith, when his hair began to fall off, made frantic efforts to keep it on. I have no doubt he anxiously tried all the vile concoctions which quackery advertises in the newspapers, for the advantage of those who wish for luxuriant locks. I dare say for a while it really weighed upon his mind, and disturbed his quiet, that he was getting bald. But now he has quite reconciled himself to his lot; and with a head smooth and sheeny as the egg of the ostrich, Smith goes on through life, and feels no pang at the remembrance of the ambrosial curls of his youth. Most young people, I dare say, think it will be a dreadful thing to grow old: a girl of eighteen thinks it must be an awful sensation to be thirty. Believe me, not at all. You are brought to it bit by bit; and when you reach the spot, you rather like the view. And it is so with graver things. We grow able to do and to bear that which it is needful that we should do and bear. As is the day, so the strength proves to be. And you have heard people tell you truly, that they have been enabled to bear what they never thought they could have come through with their reason or their life. I have no fear for the Christian man, so he keeps to the path of duty. Straining up the steep hill, his heart will grow stout in just proportion to its steepness. Yes, and if the call to martyrdom came, I should not despair of finding

men who would show themselves equal to it, even in this commonplace age, and among people who wear Highland cloaks and knickerbockers. The martyr's strength would come with the martyr's day. It is because there is no call for it now, that people look so little like it.

It is very difficult, in this world, to strongly enforce a truth, without seeming to push it into an extreme. You are very apt, in avoiding one error, to run into the opposite error; forgetting that truth and right lie generally between two extremes. And in agreeing with Sydney Smith, as to the wisdom and the duty of 'taking short views,' let us take care of appearing to approve the doings of those foolish and unprincipled people who will keep no out-look into the future time at all. A bee, you know, cannot see more than a single inch before it; and there are many men, and perhaps more women, who appear, as regards their domestic concerns, to be very much of bees. Not bees in the respect of being busy; but bees in the respect of being blind. You see this in all ranks of life. You see it in the artisan, earning good wages, yet with every prospect of being weeks out of work next summer or winter, who yet will not be persuaded to lay by a little in preparation for a rainy day. You see it in the country gentleman, who, having five thousand a year, spends ten thousand a year; resolutely shutting his eyes to the certain and not very remote consequences. You see it in the man who walks into a shop and buys a lot of things which he has not the money to pay for, in the vague hope that something will turn up. It is a comparatively thoughtful and anxious class of men who systematically overcloud the present by anticipations of the future. The more usual thing is to sacrifice the future to the present; to grasp at what in the way of present

gratification or gain can be got, with very little thought of the consequences. You see silly women, the wives of men whose families are mainly dependent on their lives, constantly urging on their husbands to extravaganees which eat up the little provision which might have been made for themselves and their children when he is gone who earned their bread. There is no sadder sight, I think, than that which is not a very uncommon sight, the care-worn, anxious husband, labouring beyond his strength, often sorrowfully calculating how he may make the ends to meet, denying himself in every way; and the extravagant idiot of a wife, bedizened with jewellery and arrayed in velvet and lace, who tosses away his hard earnings in reckless extravagance; in entertainments which he cannot afford, given to people who do not care a rush for him; in preposterous dress; in absurd furniture; in needless men-servants; in green-grocers above measure; in resolute aping of the way of living of people with twice or three times the means. It is sad to see all the forethought, prudence, and moderation of the wedded pair confined to one of them. You would say that it will not be any solid consolation to the widow, when the husband is fairly worried into his grave at last, — when his daughters have to go out as governesses, and she has to let lodgings, — to reflect that while he lived they never failed to have champagne at their dinner parties; and that they had three men to wait at table on such occasions, while Mr. Smith, next door, had never more than one and a maidservant. If such idiotic women would but look forward, and consider how all this must end! If the professional man spends all he earns, what remains when the supply is cut off; when the toiling head and hand can toil no more? Ah, a little of the

economy and management which must perforce be practised after *that* might have tended powerfully to put off the evil day. Sometimes the husband is merely the care-worn drudge who provides what the wife squanders. Have you not known such a thing as that a man should be labouring under an Indian sun, and cutting down every personal expense to the last shilling, that he might send a liberal allowance to his wife in England; while she meanwhile was recklessly spending twice what was thus sent her; running up overwhelming accounts, dashing about to public balls, paying for a bouquet what cost the poor fellow far away much thought to save, giving costly entertainments at home, filling her house with idle and empty-headed scapegraces, carrying on scandalous flirtations; till it becomes a happy thing, if the certain ruin she is bringing on her husband's head is cut short by the needful interference of Sir Cresswell Cresswell? There are cases in which tarring and feathering would soothe the moral sense of the right-minded onlooker. And even where things are not so bad as in the case of which we have been thinking, it remains the social curse of this age, that people with a few hundreds a year determinedly act in various respects as if they had as many thousands. The dinner given by a man with eight hundred a year, in certain regions of the earth which I could easily point out, is, as regards food, wine, and attendance, precisely the same as the dinner given by another man who has five thousand a year. When will this end? When will people see its silliness? In truth, you do not really, as things are in this country, make many people better off by adding a little or a good deal to their yearly income. For in all probability they were living up to the very extremity of their means be-

fore they got the addition ; and in all probability the first thing they do, on getting the addition, is so far to increase their establishment and their expense that it is just as hard a struggle as ever to make the ends meet. It would not be a pleasant arrangement, that a man who was to be carried across the straits from England to France, should be fixed on a board so weighted that his mouth and nostrils should be at the level of the water, and thus that he should be struggling for life, and barely escaping drowning all the way. Yet hosts of people, whom no one proposes to put under restraint, do as regards their income and expenditure a precisely analogous thing. They deliberately weight themselves to that degree that their heads are barely above water, and that any unforeseen emergency dips their heads under. They rent a house a good deal dearer than they can justly afford ; and they have servants more and more expensive than they ought ; and by many such things they make sure that their progress through life shall be a drowning struggle ; while, if they would rationally resolve and manfully confess that they cannot afford to have things as richer folk have them, and arrange their way of living in accordance with what they can afford, they would enjoy the feeling of ease and comfort ; they would not be ever on the wretched stretch on which they are now, nor keeping up the hollow appearance of what is not the fact. But there are folk who make it a point of honour never to admit that in doing or not doing anything, they are actuated for an instant by so despicable a consideration as the question whether or not they can afford it. And who shall reckon up the brains which this social calamity has driven into disease, or the early paralytic shocks which it has brought on ?

When you were very young, and looked forward to Future Years, did you ever feel a painful fear that you might outgrow your early home affections, and your associations with your native scenes? Did you ever think to yourself,—Will the day come when I have been years away from that river's side, and yet not care? I think we have all known the feeling. O plain church to which I used to go when I was a child, and where I used to think the singing so very splendid! O little room where I used to sleep! and you, tall tree, on whose topmost branch I cut the initials which perhaps the reader knows, did I not even then wonder to myself if the time would ever come when I should be far away from you,—far away, as now, for many years, and not likely to go back,—and yet feel entirely indifferent to the matter? and did not I even then feel a strange pain in the fear that very likely it might? These things come across the mind of a little boy with a curious grief and bewilderment. Ah, there is something strange in the inner life of a thoughtful child of eight years old! I would rather see a faithful record of his thoughts, feelings, fancies, and sorrows, for a single week, than know all the political events that have happened during that space in Spain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Russia, and Turkey. Even amid the great grief at leaving home for school in your early days, did you not feel a greater grief to think that the day might come when you would not care at all; when your home ties and affections would be outgrown; when you would be quite content to live on, month after month, far from parents, sisters, brothers, and feel hardly a perceptible blank when you remembered that they were far away? But it is of the essence of such fears, that, when the thing comes that you were afraid of, it has ceased to be fearful; still it is

with a little pang that you sometimes call to remembrance how much you feared it once. It is a daily regret, though not a very acute one, (more's the pity,) to be thrown much, in middle life, into the society of an old friend whom as a boy you had regarded as very wise, and to be compelled to observe that he is a tremendous fool. You struggle with the conviction; you think it wrong to give in to it; but you cannot help it. But it would have been a sharper pang to the child's heart, to have impressed upon the child the fact, that 'Good Mr. Goose is a fool, and some day you will understand that he is.' In those days one admits no imperfection in the people and the things one likes. You like a person; and *he is good*. *That* seems the whole case. You do not go into exceptions and reservations. I remember how indignant I felt, as a boy, at reading some depreciatory criticism of the *Waverley Novels*. The criticism was to the effect that the plots generally dragged at first, and were huddled up at the end. But to me the novels were enchaining, enthralling; and to hint a defect in them stunned one. In the boy's feeling, if a thing be good, why, there cannot be anything bad about it. But in the man's mature judgment, even in the people he likes best, and in the things he appreciates most highly, there are many flaws and imperfections. It does not vex us much now to find that this is so; but it would have greatly vexed us many years since to have been told that it would be so. I can well imagine, that, if you told a thoughtful and affectionate child, how well he would some day get on, far from his parents and his home, his wish would be that any evil might befall him rather than that! We shrink with terror from the prospect of things which we can take easily enough when they come. I dare say

Lord Chancellor Thurlow was moderately sincere when he exclaimed in the House of Peers, ‘When I forget my king, may my God forget me!’ And you will understand what Leigh Hunt meant, when, in his pleasant poem of *The Palfrey*, he tells us of a daughter who had lost a very bad and heartless father by death, that,

The daughter wept, and wept the more,
To think her tears would soon be o’er.

Even in middle age, one sad thought which comes in the prospect of Future Years is of the change which they are sure to work upon many of our present views and feelings. And the change, in many cases, will be to the worse. One thing is certain,—that your temper will grow worse, if it do not grow better. Years will sour it, if they do not mellow it. Another certain thing is, that, if you do not grow wiser, you will be growing more foolish. It is very true that there is no fool so foolish as an old fool. Let us hope, my friend, that, whatever be our honest worldly work, it may never lose its interest. We must always speak humbly about the changes which coming time will work upon us, upon even our firmest resolutions and most rooted principles; or I should say for myself that I cannot even imagine myself the same being, with bent less resolute and heart less warm to that best of all employments which is the occupation of my life. But there are few things which, as we grow older, impress us more deeply than the transitoriness of thoughts and feelings in human hearts. Nor am I thinking of contemptible people only, when I say so. I am not thinking of the fellow who is pulled up in court in an action for breach of promise of marriage, and who in one letter makes vows of unalterable affection, and in another letter,

written a few weeks or months later, tries to wriggle out of his engagement. Nor am I thinking of the weak, though well-meaning lady, who devotes herself in succession to a great variety of uneducated and unqualified religious instructors; who tells you one week how she has joined the flock of Mr. A., the converted prize-fighter, and how she regards him as by far the most improving preacher she ever heard; and who tells you the next week that she has seen through the prize-fighter, that he has gone and married a wealthy Roman Catholic, and that now she has resolved to wait on the ministry of Mr. B., an enthusiastic individual who makes shoes during the week and gives sermons on Sundays, and in whose addresses she finds exactly what suits her. I speak of the better feelings and purposes of wiser, if not better folk. Let me think here of pious emotions and holy resolutions, of the best and purest frames of heart and mind. Oh, if we could all always remain at our best! And after all, permanency is the great test. In the matter of Christian faith and feeling, in the matter of all our worthier principles and purposes, *that* which lasts longest is best. This, indeed, is true of most things. The worth of anything depends much upon its durability, — upon the wear that is in it. A thing that is merely a fine flash and over only disappoints. The highest authority has recognized this. You remember Who said to his friends, before leaving them, that He would have them bring forth fruit, and much fruit. But not even *that* was enough. The fairest profession for a time, the most earnest labour for a time, the most ardent affection for a time, would not suffice. And so the Redeemer's words were, — 'I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that *your fruit should remain.*' Well, let us trust, that,

in the most solemn of all respects, only progress shall be brought to us by all the changes of Future Years.

But it is quite vain to think that feelings, as distinguished from principles, shall not lose much of their vividness, freshness, and depth, as time goes on. You cannot now by any effort revive the exultation you felt at some unexpected great success, nor the heart-sinking of some terrible loss or trial. You know how women, after the death of a child, determine that every day, as long as they live, they will visit the little grave. And they do so for a time, sometimes for a long time; but they gradually leave off. You know how burying-places are very trimly and carefully kept at first, and how flowers are hung upon the stone; but these things gradually cease. You know how many husbands and wives, after their partner's death, determine to give the remainder of life to the memory of the departed, and would regard with sincere horror the suggestion that it was possible they should ever marry again; but after a while they do. And you will even find men, beyond middle age, who made a tremendous work at their first wife's death, and wore very conspicuous mourning, who in a very few months may be seen dangling after some new fancy, and who in the prospect of their second marriage evince an exhilaration that approaches to crackiness. It is usual to speak of such things in a ludicrous manner, but I confess the matter seems to me anything but one to laugh at. I think that the rapid dying out of warm feelings, the rapid change of fixed resolutions, is one of the most sorrowful subjects of reflection which it is possible to suggest. Ah, my friends, after we die, it would not be expedient, even if it were possible, to come back. Many of us would not like to find how very little they miss us

But still, it is the manifest intention of the Creator that strong feelings should be transitory. The sorrowful thing is when they pass and leave absolutely no trace behind them. There should always be some corner kept in the heart for a feeling which once possessed it all. Let us look at the case temperately. Let us face and admit the facts. The healthy body and mind can get over a great deal; but there are some things which it is not to the credit of our nature should ever be entirely got over. Here are sober truth, and sound philosophy, and sincere feeling together, in the words of Philip van Artevelde :—

Well, well, she's gone,
And I have tamed my sorrow. Pain and grief
Are transitory things, no less than joy;
And though they leave us not the men we were,
Yet they do leave us. You behold me here,
A man bereaved, with something of a blight
Upon the early blossoms of his life,
And its first verdure, — having not the less
A living root, and drawing from the earth
Its vital juices, from the air its powers:
And surely as man's heart and strength are whole,
His appetites regerminate, his heart
Re-opens, and his objects and desires
Spring up renewed.

But though Artevelde speaks truly and well, you remember how Mr. Taylor, in that noble play, works out to our view the sad sight of the deterioration of character, the growing coarseness and harshness, the lessening tenderness and kindness, which are apt to come with advancing years. Great trials, we know, passing over us, may influence us either for the worse or the better; and unless our nature is a very obdurate and poor one, though they may leave us, they will not leave us the men

we were. Once, at a public meeting, I heard a man in eminent station make a speech. I had never seen him before; but I remembered an inscription which I had read, in a certain churchyard far away, upon the stone that marked the resting-place of his young wife, who had died many years before. I thought of its simple words of manly and hearty sorrow. I knew that the eminence he had reached had not come till she who would have been proudest of it was beyond knowing it or caring for it. And I cannot say with what interest and satisfaction I thought I could trace, in the features which were sad without the infusion of a grain of sentimentalism, in the subdued and quiet tone of the man's whole aspect and manner and address, the manifest proof that he had not shut down the leaf upon that old page of his history, that he had never quite got over that great grief of earlier years. One felt better and more hopeful for the sight. I suppose many people, after meeting some overwhelming loss or trial, have fancied that they would soon die; but that is almost invariably a delusion. Various dogs have died of a broken heart, but very few human beings. The inferior creature has pined away at his master's loss: as for *us*, it is not that one would doubt the depth and sincerity of sorrow, but that there is more endurance in our constitution, and that God has appointed that grief shall rather mould and influence than kill. It is a much sadder sight than an early death, to see human beings live on after heavy trial, and sink into something very unlike their early selves and very inferior to their early selves. I can well believe that many a human being, if he could have a glimpse in innocent youth of what he will be twenty or thirty years after, would pray in anguish to be taken before coming to *that*! Mansie

Wauch's glimpse of destitution was bad enough ; but a million times worse is a glimpse of hardened and unabashed sin and shame. And it would be no comfort — it would be an aggravation in that view — to think that by the time you have reached that miserable point, you will have grown pretty well reconciled to it. *That* is the worst of all. To be wicked and depraved, and to feel it, and to be wretched under it, is bad enough ; but it is a great deal worse to have fallen into that depth of moral degradation, and to feel that really you don't care. The instinct of accommodation is not always a blessing. It is happy for us, that, though in youth we hoped to live in a castle or a palace, we can make up our mind to live in a little parsonage or a quiet street in a country town. It is happy for us, that, though in youth we hoped to be very great and famous, we are so entirely reconciled to being little and unknown. But it is not happy for the poor girl who walks the Haymarket at night that she feels her degradation so little. It is not happy that she has come to feel towards her miserable life so differently now from what she would have felt towards it, had it been set before her while she was the blooming, thoughtless creature in the little cottage in the country. It is only by fits and starts that the poor drunken wretch, living in a garret upon a little pittance allowed him by his relations, who was once a man of character and hope, feels what a sad pitch he has come to. If you could get him to feel it constantly, there would be some hope of his reclamation even yet.

It seems to me a very comforting thought, in looking on to Future Years, if you are able to think that you are in a profession or a calling from which you will never

retire. For the prospect of a total change in your mode of life, and the entire cessation of the occupation which for many years employed the greater part of your waking thoughts, and all this amid the failing powers and flagging hopes of declining years, is both a sad and a perplexing prospect to a thoughtful person. For such a person cannot regard this great change simply in the light of a rest from toil and worry; he will know quite well what a blankness, and listlessness, and loss of interest in life, will come of feeling all at once that you have nothing at all to do. And so it is a great blessing, if your vocation be one which is a dignified and befitting one for an old man to be engaged in, one that beseems his gravity and his long experience, one that beseems even his slow movements and his white hairs. It is a pleasant thing to see an old man a judge; his years become the judgment-seat. But then the old man can hold such an office only while he retains strength of body and mind efficiently to perform its duties; and he must do all his work for himself: and accordingly a day must come when the venerable Chancellor resigns the Great Seal; when the aged Justice or Baron must give up his place; and when these honoured Judges, though still retaining considerable vigour, but vigour less than enough for their hard work, are compelled to feel that their occupation is gone. And accordingly I hold that what is the best of all professions, for many reasons, is especially so for this, that you need never retire from it. In the Church you need not do all your duty yourself. You may get assistance to supplement your own lessening strength. The energetic young curate or curates may do that part of the parish work which exceeds the power of the ageing incumbent, while the entire parochial machinery has still

the advantage of being directed by his wisdom and experience, and while the old man is still permitted to do what he can with such strength as is spared to him, and to feel that he is useful in the noblest cause yet. And even to extremest age and frailty, — to age and frailty which would long since have incapacitated the judge for the Bench — the parish clergyman may take some share in the much-loved duty in which he has laboured so long. He may still, though briefly, and only now and then, address his flock from the pulpit, in words which his very feebleness will make far more touchingly effective than the most vigorous eloquence and the richest and fullest tones of his young coadjutors. There never will be, within the sacred walls, a silence and reverence more profound than when the withered kindly face looks as of old upon the congregation, to whose fathers its owner first ministered, and which has grown up mainly under his instruction, — and when the voice that falls familiarly on so many ears tells again, quietly and earnestly, the old story which we all need so much to hear. And he may still look in at the parish school, and watch the growth of a generation that is to do the work of life when he is in his grave; and kindly smooth the children's heads; and tell them how One, once a little child, and never more than a young man, brought salvation alike to young and old. He may still sit by the bedside of the sick and dying, and speak to such with the sympathy and the solemnity of one who does not forget that the last great realities are drawing near to both. But there are vocations which are all very well for young or middle-aged people, but which do not quite suit the old. Such is that of the barrister. Wrangling and hair-splitting, browbeating and bewildering witnesses, making

coarse jokes to excite the laughter of common jurymen, and addressing such with clap-trap bellowings, are not the work for grey-headed men. If such remain at the bar, rather let them have the more refined work of the Equity Courts, where you address judges, and not juries; and where you spare clap-trap and misrepresentation, if for no better reason, because you know that these will not stand you in the slightest stead. The work which best befits the aged, the work for which no mortal can ever become too venerable and dignified or too weak and frail, is the work of Christian usefulness and philanthropy. And it is a beautiful sight to see, as I trust we all have seen, *that* work persevered in with the closing energies of life. It is a noble test of the soundness of the principle that prompted to its first undertaking. It is a hopeful and cheering sight to younger men, looking out with something of fear to the temptations and trials of the years before them. Oh! if the grey-haired clergyman, with less now, indeed, of physical strength and mere physical warmth, yet preaches, with the added weight and solemnity of his long experience, the same blessed doctrines now, after forty years, that he preached in his early prime; if the philanthropist of half a century since is the philanthropist still, — still kind, hopeful, and unwearied, though with the snows of age upon his head, and the hand that never told its fellow of what it did now trembling as it does the deed of mercy; then I think that even the most doubtful will believe that the principle and the religion of such men were a glorious reality! The sternest of all touchstones of the genuineness of our better feelings is the fashion in which they stand the wear of years.

But my shortening space warns me to stop ; and I must cease, for the present, from these thoughts of Future Years, — cease, I mean, from writing about that mysterious tract before us : who can cease from thinking of it ? You remember how the writer of that little poem which has been quoted asks Time to touch gently him and his. Of course he spoke as a poet, stating the case fancifully, — but not forgetting, that, when we come to sober sense, we must prefer our requests to an Ear more ready to hear us and a Hand more ready to help. It is not to Time that I shall apply to lead me through life into immortality ! And I cannot think of years to come without going back to a greater poet, whom we need not esteem the less because his inspiration was loftier than that of the Muses, who has summed up so grandly in one comprehensive sentence all the possibilities which could befall *him* in the days and ages before him. “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory !” Let us humbly trust that in that sketch, round and complete, of all that can ever come to us, my readers and I may be able to read the history of our Future Years !



CONCLUSION.

AND now, friendly reader, who have borne me company so far, your task is ended. You will have no more of the RECREATIONS OF A COUNTRY PARSON. Yet do not be alarmed. I trust you have not seen the writer's last appearance. It is only that the essays which he hopes yet to write, will not be composed in the comparative leisure of a country clergyman's quiet life. And no merely is it still a pleasant change of occupation, to write such chapters as those you have read: but the author cannot forget that to them he is indebted for the acquaintance of some of the most valued friends he has in this world. It was especially delightful to find a little sympathetic public, whose taste these papers suited; and to which they have not been devoid of profit and comfort. Nor was it without a certain subdued exultation that a quiet Scotch minister learned that away across the ocean he had found an audience as large and sympathetic as in his own country; and a kind appreciation by the organs of criticism there, which he could not read without much emotion. Of course, if I had fancied myself a great genius, it would have seemed nothing strange that the

thoughts I had written down in my little study in the country manse, should be read by many fellow-creatures four thousand miles off. But then I knew I was not a great genius : and so I felt it at once a great pleasure and a great surprise. My heart smote me when I thought of some flippant words of depreciation which these essays have contained concerning our American brothers. They are the last this hand shall ever write : and I never will forget how simple thoughts, only sincere and not unconsidered, found their way to hearts, kindly Scotch and English yet, though beating on the farther side of the Great Atlantic.

After all, a clergyman's great enjoyment is in his duty : and I think that, unless he be crushed down by a parish of utter misery and destitution, in which all he can do is like a drop in the ocean (as that great and good man Dr. Guthrie tells us he was), the town is to the clergyman better than the country. The crowded city, when all is said, contains the best of the race. Your mind is stirred up there, to do what you could not have done elsewhere. The best of your energy and ability is brought out by the never-ceasing spur.

Yet you will be sensible of various evils in the city clergyman's life. One is the great evil of over-work. You are always on the stretch. You never feel that your work is overtaken. The time never comes, in which you feel that you may sit down and rest : never comes, at least, save in the autumnal holiday. It is expedient that a city clergyman should have his mind well stored before going to his charge : for there he will find a perpetual drain upon his mind, and very little time for refilling it by general reading. To prepare two sermons

a week, or even one sermon a week, for an educated congregation (or indeed for any congregation), implies no small sustained effort. It is not so very hard to write one sermon in one week ; but is very hard to write thirty sermons in thirty successive weeks. You know how five miles in five hours are nothing : but a thousand miles in a thousand hours are killing. But every one knows that the preparation for the pulpit is the least part of a town clergyman's work. You have many sick to visit regularly : many frail and old people who cannot come to church. You have schools, classes, missions. And there is the constant effort to maintain some acquaintance with the families that attend your church, so that you and they shall not be strangers. I am persuaded that there ought to be at least two clergymen to every extensive parish. For it is not expedient that the clergy should have their minds and bodies ever on the strain, just to get through the needful work of the day. There is no opportunity, then, for the accumulation of some stock and store of thought and learning. And one important service which the clergy of a country ought to render it, is the maintenance of learning, and general culture. Indeed, a man not fairly versed in literature and science is not capable of preaching as is needful at the present day. And when always overdriven, a man is tempted to lower his standard : and instead of trying to do his work to the very best of his ability, to wish just to get decently through it.

Then, as for other men, they have the great happiness of knowing when their work is done. When a lawyer has attended to his cases, he has no more to do that day. So when the doctor has visited his patients. But to clerical work there is no limit. Your work is to do all the good you can. There is the parish : there is the popula-

tion : and the uneasy conscience is always suggesting this and that new scheme of benevolent exertion. The only limit to the clergyman's duty is his strength : and very often that limit is outrun. Oh that one could wisely fix what one may safely and rightly do ; and then resolutely determine not to attempt any more !* But who can do that ? If your heart be in your work, you are every now and then knocking yourself up. And you cannot help it. You advise your friends prudently against over-work ; and then you go and work till you drop.

And a further evil of the town parish is, that a great part of your work is done by the utmost stretch of body and mind. Much of it is work of that nature, that when you are not actually doing it, you wonder how you can do it at all. When you think of it, it is a very great trial and effort to preach each Sunday to a thousand or fifteen hundred human beings. And by longer experience, and that humbler self-estimate which longer experience brings, the trial is ever becoming greater. It is the utmost strain of human energy, to do that duty fittingly. You know how easily some men go through their work. It is constant and protracted ; but not a very great strain at any one time : there is no overwhelming nervous tension. I suppose even the Chief Justice, or the Lord Chancellor, when in the morning he walks into Court and takes his seat on the bench, does so without a trace of nervous tremour. He is thoroughly cool. He has a perfect conviction that he is equal to his work ; that he is master of it. But preaching is to many men an unceasing nervous excitement. There is great wear in it. And this is so, I am persuaded, even with the most eminent men. Preaching is a thing by itself. When you properly reflect upon it, it is very solemn, responsible, and

awful work. Not long since, I heard the Bishop of Oxford preach to a very great congregation. I was sitting very near him, and watched him with the professional interest. I am much mistaken if that great man was not as nervous as a young parson, preaching for the first time. He had a number of little things in the pulpit to look after: his cap, gloves, handkerchief, sermon-ease: I remember the nervous way in which he was twitching them about, and arranging them. No doubt that tremour wore off when he began to speak; and he gave a most admirable sermon. Still, the strain had been there, and had been felt. And I do not think that the like can recur week by week, without considerable wear of the principle of life within. Now, in preaching to a little country congregation, there is much less of that wear: to say nothing of the increased physical effort of addressing many hundreds of people, as compared with that of addressing eighty or ninety. It is quite possible that out of the many hundreds, there may not be very many individuals of whom, intellectually, you stand in very overwhelming awe: and the height of a crowd of a thousand people is no more than the height of the tallest man in it. Still, there is always something very imposing and awe-striking in the presence of a multitude of human beings.

And yet, if you have physieal strength equal to your work, I do not think that for all the nervous anxiety which attends your charge, or for all its constant pressure, you would ever wish to leave it. There is a happiness in such sacred duty which only those who have experieneed it know. And without (so far as you are aware) a shade of self-eoneeit, but in entire humility and

deep thankfulness, you will rejoice that God makes you the means of comfort and advantage to many of your fellow-men. It is a delightful thing to think that you are *of use*: and, whether in town or country, the diligent clergyman may always hope that he is so, less or more.

THE END.



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